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THE TIMES

No. 64,584 FRIDAY MARCH 5 1993 45p

Major asks public for honours nominations

Honours are to be given on merit and to favour voluntary workers under changes designed to end class distinctions in the awards system

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN Major yesterday announced sweeping reforms of the centuries-old honours system in a further step towards his classless society.

Launching a new system based on merit rather than class, Mr Major told the Commons that members of the public could recommend "deserving cases" for honours by filling in forms supplied by Downing Street.

He heralded the end of automatic knighthoods for top mandarins and the abolition of traditional class distinctions for many awards, including military medals. "Honours should be awarded on merit for exceptional achievement or exceptional service, over and above what normally might be expected," he said.

The prime minister was attacked by the Opposition for not going far enough and for insisting that he would retain political honours for long-serving Tory backbenchers.



In future, honours will be awarded on merit alone, with particular emphasis on voluntary service and charitable work. Downing Street indicated that honours previously awarded to show business personalities are likely to be given to community volunteers such as those helping to combat juvenile crime.

Mr Major wants anybody to be able to nominate people for awards, announced twice a year. There will also be more royal investitures, carried out both by the Queen and the Prince of Wales, some of which will take place in Hollywood House, Palace, in Edinburgh. The prime minister announced that he had no intention of creating any hereditary peerages but insisted that honours would still be given for political service.

John Smith, the Labour leader, accused him of a

"shoddy misuse" of the system, but acknowledged that there would be widespread acceptance of the abolition of distinctions of rank and status in civilian and military awards. He questioned why only Tory governments used honours as patronage for political supporters. "Have you no shame about the way that each year eight Conservative MPs regularly and automatically collect knighthoods, for no other reason but being supporters of the ruling political party?" he said.

Mr Major insisted that High Court judges would continue to receive knighthoods on their appointments "to preserve the independence of the Bench", but later hinted that he might review the retention of awards for judges and journalists.

Changes that will take effect in the next honours list in June include the abolition of the British Empire Medal, traditionally given to the working classes. Everyone will become eligible for the Member of the British Empire award, traditionally given to the professional and middle classes.

The Imperial Service Order, which ranks below the MBE and the OBE and is usually reserved for long-serving civil servants, will also be abolished. Automatic knighthoods will no longer be awarded to top civil servants, permanent secretaries or senior members of the armed forces.

Mr Major emphasised that everyone would have a stake in the new honours system. "There should be different levels of award to reflect different levels of achievement," he said. Awards should not be automatic and follow simply as a result of doing a particular job," he said.

Honourable thing, page 2
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Eye for detail: Stephen Dix, of Spink jewellers, examining insignia yesterday

No 10 acts to defuse Thatcher dispute

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND NICHOLAS WOOD

JOHN Major delivered a spirited defence of his predecessor last night after his remarks suggesting that he was out of sympathy with the industrial policies of the Thatcher years threatened to boil over into a new bout of internal Tory warfare.

Baroness Thatcher was reported by close colleagues to be satisfied after the prime minister and his staff spent much of an embarrassing day emphasising that his comments had not been intended as an attack on the former prime minister.

Downing Street was forced into action after Lady Thatcher's allies, led by Lord Tebbit, sprang to her defence in the wake of Mr Major's interview with *The Independent*, which said that he had held a minority view about the importance of manufacturing industry during the 1980s.

The conclusion among ministers last night was that Mr Major must have been referring to Lord Lawson, his former boss at the Treasury, who was on record during the 1980s as suggesting that the manufacturing sector did not deserve special help.

The furore gave the Labour party a field day. Throughout an uncomfortable question time in the Commons, Mr Major was taunted by John Smith and other Labour MPs about his reported comments. Having run out of excuses for the "abject" failure of his economic policies, Mr Major was now trying to pin the blame on his predecessor in whose government he was Chancellor, Mr Smith said.

Mr Major retorted that he had been misled by reports of his interview and said that "Lady Thatcher did more to help British industry than the Labour party has ever done".

The contentious passage in the interview came when it was put to Mr Major: "But the idea got about in the 1980s that actually making things

Muslim widow tells of her escape from mass grave

FROM BILL FROST IN TRAVNIK

CRAMPED together in the squalor of a freezing school room, Muslim victims of "ethnic cleansing" yesterday told of the atrocities and war crimes committed by Serbs in Bosnia.

An old woman rocked from side to side and wept as she explained how her husband and son had been murdered with 25 other civilians. She had escaped death after jumping into a mass grave where she remained until the Serb execution squad had finished its work.

Zena, 67, told of the night that masked men in combat fatigues had rounded up their victims before marching them at gunpoint into woodland near Sipovo, in central Bosnia. Independent witnesses at a refugee centre in Travnik confirmed her harrowing story.

"They came to our village at about 3pm shouting for the Muslims to come out. About 30 of us were herded together at gunpoint. They marched us down towards the forest saying we were to be questioned."

"I was with my husband and my son. We were all frightened. Awful things had happened in the woods but they had rifles. Escape was impossible," she said. The Serbs led their captives to a glade where they were made to line up at the edge of a shallow ravine. The executioners then opened up with automatic rifles, said Zena.

The bodies toppled backwards into the hollow. The old woman saw her husband and then her son fall backwards into their grave. "All I loved was taken from me in a second. At that moment I jumped in with them, not

hoping to survive but wishing to die too," she said. Sometime later, Zena recovered consciousness to find herself beneath the corpse of a neighbour. She could still hear the voices of Serb soldiers. Hours later, she crawled from the mass grave to the house of a Serb family who had secretly remained friendly. They dressed her wounds and cared for her, she said, pointing to cuts and bruises on her leg and chest.

The atrocity had been carried out by troops who had recently attended the funeral of a fellow soldier, she explained. "Some Serbs hate what is happening. But

United Nations peacekeepers in Belgrade said yesterday that Serb commanders had provisionally agreed to let tens of thousands of civilians leave the besieged Muslim enclaves of Cerska, Zepa and Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia during a 24-hour weekend period.... Page 12

Barclays drops £242m into the red

By PATRICIA TEHAN

BARCLAYS Bank has made a loss of £242 million, the first loss in its 177-year history, brought on by £2.55 billion provisions against bad debts after company collapses.

Barclays, once Britain's biggest bank, was the only one of the country's four big clearing banks to report losses for last year. The poor state of its finances was further brought home with the decision to cut the dividend payment for 1992 by 28 per cent to just 15.15p. Andrew Buxton, Barclays chairman and chief executive, blamed the losses on "poor lending decisions", particularly to property and construction companies.

Barclays has been one of the lead banks to many of the most spectacular corporate collapses in recent years, including Olympia & York, Heron, Imry and Mountleigh.

Despite the poor figures, Mr Buxton said he did not plan to resign, did not expect board changes, and refused to be drawn on when the bank is likely to split the top job. Last year Mr Buxton had said he had bowed to pressure from the bank's big institutional investors to split the role of chairman and chief executive.

Asked about concerns that small business customers are being charged hefty fees for management time and information they have not solicited, Mr Buxton said he was unable to comment on specific cases, but that it was the bank's policy to charge for management time. The fees were set out in a publicised charging structure.

Mr Buxton said Barclays had improved its lending practices and is concentrating on reducing operating costs, improving its management of risks and better service to customers. Barclays cut 6,400 jobs and shut 189 branches last year. Mr Buxton said another 9,000 jobs will go and another 350 branches will close in the next two years.

New York bombing suspect held

FROM WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU IN WASHINGTON

THE White House announced last night that an arrest had been made in connection with last Friday's bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York.

White House officials said the arrested man was an American citizen connected with a Muslim fundamentalist organisation linked to the killing of Rabbi Meir Kahane, founder of the militant Jewish Defence League and Israel's anti-Arab Kach party, who was assassinated in New York in 1990. FBI officials would not confirm this, however, saying they did not wish to jeopardise further investigations.

The acting attorney-general, Stuart Gerson, and the director of the FBI, William Sessions, refused to identify the suspect. Mr Gerson said the authorities were looking for other suspects.

A New York television station, WNBC, gave the name of the arrested man as Salama Mohammed, aged 26. The station said he had rented a van in his own name, and the breakthrough in the investigation apparently came from records of parking stubs at the underground car park in the World Trade Centre where the bomb exploded. The station said he had been arrested in New Jersey and that other arrests were expected.

The announcement from the White House, made by the communications director, George Stephanopoulos, was an unusual step. It reflects acute concern in Washington about the arrival of European-style bombing attacks.

Last week's blast underneath the twin tower building in New York created a 100ft crater, and left at least five people dead and more than 1,000 injured.

Earlier, Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, criticised the Bosnia Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, for issuing what amounted to a threat that US aid to Bosnia could cause terrorism in America. Mr Karadzic said in what he called an open letter to America: "The tragic and deplorable terrorist incident in the World Trade Centre bombing is fresh testimony to the extraordinary volatility and immediate dangers of direct involvement."



Lord Tebbit: sprang to former leader's defence

was not so important in this country."

The prime minister replied: "I don't agree with it. I didn't agree with it in the 80s. I was a minority view in the 1980s. I am not a minority view now and, anyway, I am in a better position to expound my views. I don't agree with that. Services are very important - the City of London is the supreme example of that - but services aren't enough because services in a recession are the first thing you cut, so we need the manufacturing base both as import substitution and as part of the continuing export drive." He then apparently compounded the offence by referring to his "inheritance" on entering No 10.

Changing tack, page 8
Diary, page 16
Leading article, page 17

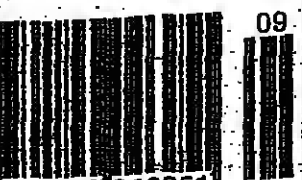
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MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

PM's black day for knights and lickspittle hacks

I cannot be out of order for a Labour MP to accuse a Tory, in the Chamber, of being "obedient", and it is probably just about permitted for MPs to call each other "hacks". Whether there are circumstances in which the term "lickspittle" is in order, we must doubt. And when fiery Paul Flynn (Lab, Newport W) told the prime minister that knights and lickspittles were on the benches behind him were automatic, we knew he was out of order.

Madam Speaker confirmed it. "Withdraw those words!" she cried, and, like the obedient — ahem — helpful fellow he is, Mr Flynn immediately did so. But the Tory benches were in uproar. Tories who have already been knighted were indignant at the suggestion that they owed their knighthoods to having behaved like obedient, lickspittle hacks for decades, and still not been knighted, were indignant that their efforts were being overlooked by Flynn — and, indeed, by the PM.

There is no way you can stir a hornet's nest like the honours system, as Mr Major rather valiantly did yesterday, without yourself being stung by the necessary absurdity of any such system. The moment the prime minister rose to make his statement, you knew that the few short yards he dare venture would be shrugged off as an obvious set, while the rolling acres of snobbery and corruption upon which he dare not trespass would be pointed to by all with cries of anger.

With both the last two Labour prime ministers now in the Lords, John Smith still seemed unabashed in his denunciation of political honours. "That is not the view," said Mr Major, smiling with the confidence of a man carrying a dozen Lab-

our applications in his pocket, "held by a great many hon members in his own party, as the Rt hon gentleman privately knows."

The Liberal Democrat leader asked why we couldn't have a single honours list, with different gradations. MPs giggled. "The Rt hon Paddy Ashdown, OY (B)" (Order of Yeovil, first class) sprang to mind. Or perhaps recipients could be decorated according to a system of proportional representation (single transferable vote)?

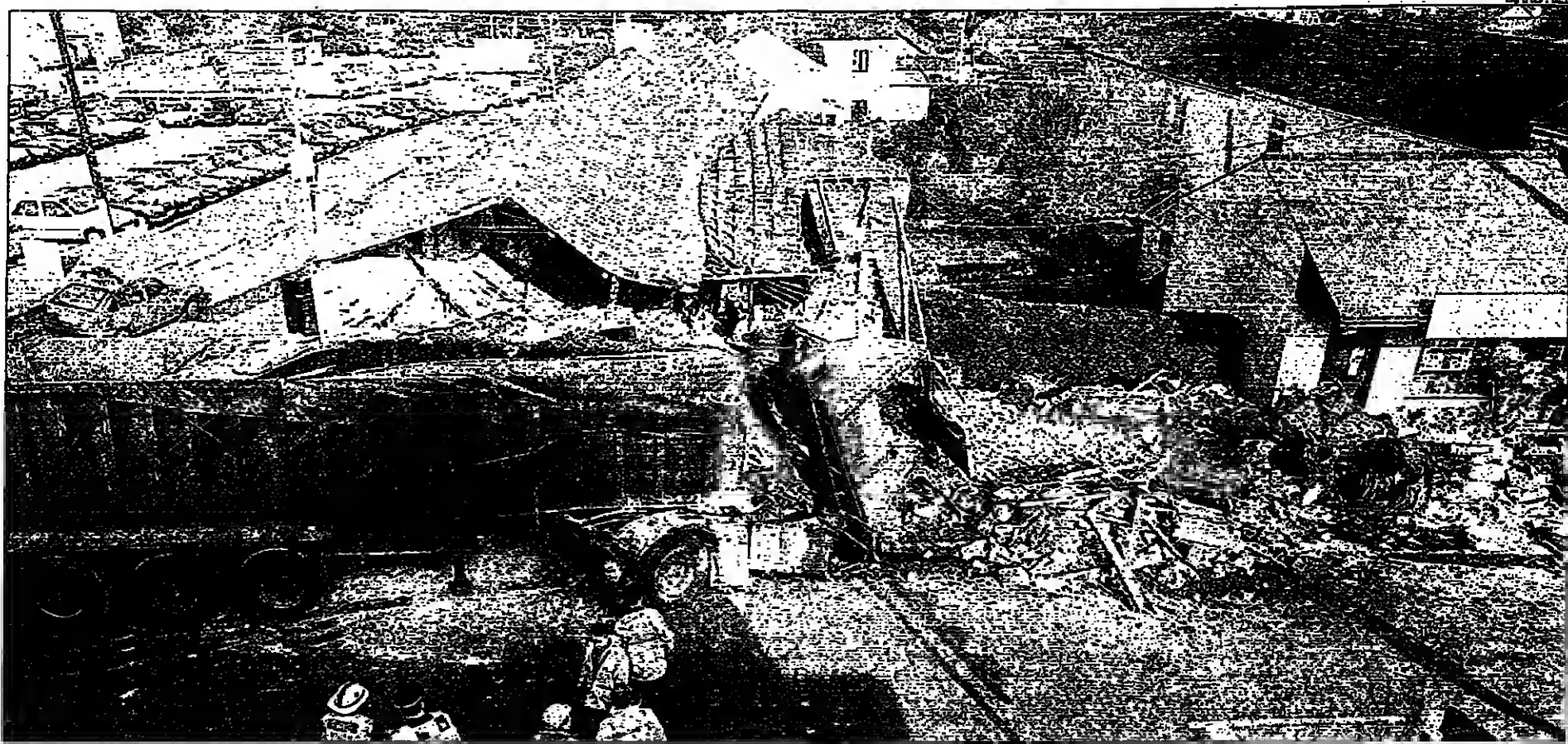
Tony Benn supplied the historical perspective. "Ever since William the Conqueror took us into the Common Market..." he began.

Knights rose at his peril. Sir Peter Tapsell punctured the laughter by taking the bull by the horns: "As an example, perhaps, of the somewhat haphazard way in which routine political honours are awarded..."

"My hon friend understates his own distinction," the PM protested.

Ministers rose at their peril, too. Long-serving Anthony Steen (C, S Hams, Mr) had no time to speak, before several of his younger colleagues chorused "arise, Sir Anthony!" Peter Mandelson (Lab, Hartlepool, Mr) who — if Neil Kinnock had won the last election — might have been Lord Hartlepool by now, asked why the Tories had brought back hereditary peerages. Interestingly, Major replied that he did not plan to create such peerages. Hard cheese. Lady T. Douglas Hurd, beside him, greeted his teeth as dreams of a viscountcy flew away. Absent from the Chamber, Michael, Duke of Henley, was not there as his dukedom crumbled.

Finally, the PM cited arch-rebel Sir Teddy Taylor as evidence that prime ministers do not try to bribe with honours. Some of us see Sir Teddy as evidence that they try without success.



Trail of destruction: the remains of a butcher's shop in St Austell, Cornwall, demolished by a runaway 38-ton coal lorry which killed a woman motorist yesterday. The lorry lurched down a hill, crushing the woman's car, before embedding itself in a florist's shop. The lorry's brakes are thought to have failed. Its 47-year-old driver suffered minor injuries

Council tax averages over £400

By IAN MURRAY

THE average council tax throughout Britain will be higher than the government target figures, according to the most complete survey so far, although bills will be about 11 per cent lower than for the last community charge.

The independent survey found that properties in bands B and D in England will be taxed at an average of £567 against the £493 level hoped for by the government. In Scotland, the average will be £548, compared with the £413 target, and in Wales the average is £327 instead of the £260 suggested.

Many householders will qualify for discounts and exemptions, however, while low-income discounts and transitional relief for those facing steep increases in their bills will bring down the average size of payments. The average bill in England will be £444, in Scotland £408 and in Wales £262. The survey was prepared for *Public Finance and Accountancy* magazine and *Channel 4 News*.

Clarke backs switch to performance pay in police reforms

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

KENNETH Clarke is preparing to end the formula that gives police an annual pay rise linked to inflation.

The home secretary has decided that the arrangement, introduced in 1979 when conditions in the police service and recruitment needed to be improved, is out-of-date. He will use the publication of a report by Sir Patrick Sheehy into police working practices to move to performance-related pay, which he believes better reflects modern working conditions and brings the police into line with industry.

The report, due to be published within a few weeks, is understood to propose that the police pay bill should be distributed in a way that reflects initiative and ability.

Even so, the expected change will cause concern in the police service. Abandon-

ment of the formula will leave police pay open to an attack by the Treasury.

At the same time, Mr Clarke is close to a decision to abandon the home secretary's historic control over the Metropolitan police. He is fighting opposition from cabinet col-



Clarke supports end of automatic rises

leagues, notably Michael Howard, the environment secretary, to his plans to weaken the grip of local authorities on police forces. Mr Clarke wants to rid the authorities of politics and reshape them so that they include Home Office appointees, local businessmen and people with significant community experience as well as representatives of local councils. He hopes to reduce the number of police forces outside London from 43 to about 25, and to shift funding to Whitehall.

He is facing objections from Mr Howard and Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary and a former home secretary, who are worried about the loss of local accountability.

The pay of a police constable has risen from £6,471 in 1979 to £20,952 and that of a sergeant from £7,095 to £22,992.

French destroy fish netted by own boats

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

RIOTING French fishermen have scored an own goal by destroying a cargo of fish caught by their own countrymen and intended for French consumers. They were apparently misled because the fish was being carried in a British lorry. French police refused to intervene and looted some of the fish, according to an eyewitness.

The incident, the latest in a series of violent protests by French fishermen against cheap imports, occurred in Cherbourg, in Normandy, on Wednesday night. Some 70 men waited on the quayside to ambush lorries as they disembarked from the *Courances*, owned by Brittany Ferries, on its arrival from Poole, in Dorset.

The protesters picked on a container lorry owned by Stuart Taylor International of Blackburn, Lancashire, forced open its rear doors, dumped part of the cargo of 27,000 fish into the water and poured dye on the rest.

Stuart Taylor, the haulage company's owner, said: "We lost the whole 19 tons. What the fishermen didn't know was that the cargo consisted of shark, ling, monkfish, grenadier and other species caught by French boats with all-French crews off the west of Scotland and landed at Lochinver. It was destined for customers in Lorient in Brittany."

Paul Docksey, a driver of

another lorry, who witnessed the incident, said: "Some of the rioters had scarves wrapped round their faces. Two police cars carrying nine gendarmes and a minibus with a another five were present but did nothing."

The violence lasted for about 15 minutes, according to Mr Docksey. The fishermen then moved off after shaking hands and exchanging pleasantries with the police. "I then saw some of the police and port officials filling the boots of their cars with undamaged plastic tubs of fish that were still lying on the quayside."

Earlier on Wednesday, French fishermen raided a warehouse elsewhere in Brittany and destroyed 80 tons of fish, mostly from Poland, causing £130,000 worth of damage. Last week they ransacked a wholesale fish market near Paris, an action that was followed by an increased package of financial aid from the French government and the imposition of tariffs on imported fish by the European Community.

In London, the agriculture ministry said yesterday it was aware of the incident and would be raising the matter with the French. John Major told the House of Commons last week that disruption of free trade by French fishermen was intolerable and that full compensation for any damage would be expected.

Major does the honourable thing

By MICHAEL DYNES, WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

SOCIAL climbing, snobbery, pretension, and the elemental desire to highlight one's superior pedigree, have for centuries been components of the honours system.

The system has, for centuries, been based on the notion of society as a pyramid. However, the decline in deference that has accompanied the emergence of mass democracy has made it stand out like a sore thumb in the age of meritocracy.

The twice yearly honours lists often baffle. Although honoured by the Queen, the selection of civil servants, party workers, generals, ambassadors, entre-

preneurs, entertainers and ordinary folk, is made by the prime minister.

The Tudors were the first to exploit systematically the craving of the middle classes for respectability by selling them honours. The emergence of democracy and constitutional monarchy in the nineteenth century put the honours system into the hands of elected politicians, adding the risk of corruption.

It was the auctioning of honours by Maundy Gregory, in an attempt to replenish the Liberal party's coffers between 1919 and 1922 that transformed the practice into a disreputable science.

Just as George V became exasperated at Gregory's trade, which led to the 1923 Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act

outlawing the sale of honours, so John Major, in pursuit of a classless society, is attacking the more anachronistic elements of the honours system.

□ The Military Cross and Military Medal are expected to be merged, although experts dispute claims that the bravery awards were introduced deliberately as one honour for officers, the other for men (Michael Evans writes).

The MC was instituted in 1914 because there was no appropriate gallantry award for junior officers. The MM was instituted in 1916.

Honours shake-up, page 1
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School head quits curriculum council

A leading independent school headmistress has resigned from the National Curriculum Council in protest at proposed changes to the way English is taught and what she says is a politically biased approach.

In her resignation letter, Joan Clancy, head of North London Collegiate School, told John Patten, the education secretary, that "the dominant aim has become a curriculum designed for testing and the result is a model of English teaching which is barren and anti-intellectual".

She said the proposed new curriculum, which will be delivered today to Mr Patten, would not raise standards and was distinctly authoritarian in tone; it reduced what should be the intellectual centre of the curriculum to the "teaching of apostrophes" and sucked it dry of interest. "It is almost as if there is a determination on the part of the council to pick a fight with English teachers," she added.

Rail staff vote on strike

Rail workers will today vote on whether to strike over job losses after their failure to secure a promise from British Rail that there will be no compulsory redundancies. The result of the ballot by the 68,000 members of RMT, the largest rail union, will be announced later in the month. The poll comes as miners are being urged to vote for a 24-hour strike as part of their campaign against pit closures. British Coal has warned them that redundancy benefits and earnings could be affected if they strike. Action by the RMT is caused by fears that job losses could be even greater than the 5,000 announced in November. The union believes a further 15,000 redundancies are planned in the next 12 months.

Killer father given life

A man was imprisoned for life by the High Court in Aberdeen yesterday for murdering his three-month-old son. Kevin Scott, a factory worker, Aberdeen, was charged with the murder of his son, who was found dead in a fit of temper. The boy had been left in the care of Scott while his mother was working in a pub. The court was told that Roddy's injuries were among the worst doctors had seen. The baby's skull fracture was consistent with his having been held by the legs and swung against a wall.

Festival budget cut

An arts festival reputed to be the oldest in Europe has had its local authority grant cut by 25 per cent. The Three Choirs Festival, where Elgar and Vaughan Williams were premiered, will receive £5,000 less from Worcester City Council this year. A growing list of arts bodies is losing money as local authorities finalise budgets. The Northern Ballet Theatre has lost 20 per cent of its local grant and Bristol New Vic has suffered a 40 per cent cut. The Arts Council wants local authority arts spending made statutory.

Orkney minister retires

The Church of Scotland minister questioned by police during the Orkney child abuse scandal in February 1991 is to retire. The Rev Morris McKendle insisted that his decision had nothing to do with the unsubstantiated allegations, or the Lord Clyde report into the affair. "Despite their efforts, the social workers have not succeeded in pushing me out," he said. But he admitted that the stresses of the past two years had affected his health. He is 65 and under church rules could work for another five years.

Two face bomb charges

Jan Alexander Taylor and Patrick Thomas Hayes will appear before a high security court in London today charged with three bombing offences, including the attack on Harrods in January in which three people were injured. One of the men is also accused of attempting to murder a policeman in Stoke Newington, north London, earlier this week.

Glasgow jobs setback

The government admitted last night that 700 army jobs initially promised for Glasgow might now go to Stockport, Greater Manchester. The about-turn apparently results from a blunder in which officials recommended centralising pay and personnel operations in Glasgow, unaware that there were premises in Stockport at a fifth of the price.

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Tony Bland doctor asks pro-life groups to halt protests

By KATE ALDERSON

THE doctor who cared for Tony Bland for four years until his death on Wednesday night said yesterday that he had no second thoughts about his actions. Dr Jim Howe appealed to pro-life campaigners to let the matter be.

Just days before Mr Bland died, his father, Allen, told BBC Radio 4: "He looks so peaceful. This is what we've been wanting. We've made him as comfortable as possible. The alternative would have been to wait for an infection, which would have been distressing. It's better than we thought."

The Rt Rev David Konstant, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Leeds, whose diocese includes Airedale Hospital, expressed unease about Mr Bland's death: "It has pushed forward the bound-

aries of medicine and science. Whenever that happens there are always new moral and ethical questions to be considered."

The Rt Rev Konstant said the law needed to be looked at "very carefully" in the light of the death. "But I am certainly not in a position to criticise those who have taken the decision."

Dr Howe, who switched off the 22-year-old Hillsborough victim's feeding machine 11 days ago, condemned as foolish the pledge by James Morrow, a former Scottish Roman Catholic priest, to take out a private prosecution for murder against him.

Dr Howe said: "It is sad when anyone's life comes to an end, but Tony's life really ended almost four years ago in the Hillsborough stadium in Sheffield. So the sadness is eased by a sense of relief that his, and his family's, long ordeal has finally come to an end. Tony's parents are very relieved that their son's death was peaceful and quiet."

Opening the inquest yesterday, James Turnbull, the Bradford coroner, said that Mr Bland died of kidney failure on Wednesday evening, following extensive head and chest crush injuries at Sheffield Wednesday's football ground in 1989. His injuries left him in a persistent vegetative state, unable to think, speak, feel or hear. He

will be cremated in his home town of Keighley on Monday. Mr Turnbull paid tribute to Mr Bland's parents who, he said, had been "calm and dignified" throughout the whole ordeal. He also praised the staff who nursed Mr Bland at Airedale NHS Hospital, Keighley, West Yorkshire. "I want to assure them in public that what they did was superlative." A full inquest will follow.

Mr Bland's parents, who were with their son when he died at 9.30pm on Wednesday, yesterday asked that they be allowed to grieve privately as they attended the funeral of Elizabeth Bland, Tony Bland's grandmother, who died in the same hospital five days ago.

Tony's name will now be added to the memorial to the Hillsborough victims at Liverpool Football Club's Anfield stadium, and a minute's silence will be observed in his memory before Saturday's home match against Manchester United.

Pro-life campaigners, who had protested outside the hospital since the final ruling, condemned the decision to allow Mr Bland to die. A spokesman for the Campaign Against Medical Killing said: "Tony Bland will be remembered not as the last victim of the Hillsborough disaster, but as the first victim of legalised euthanasia."



Bland died quietly and peacefully

And the bride wore black for fashion week



Best of British: while many of the leading names are absent from London Fashion Week this year, the top British designer Caroline Charles was putting on the style at the Ritz hotel yesterday. At the

launch of the week, the showcase for Britain's £7 billion clothing industry, she signalled a comeback for rich fabrics and opulence with other creations. Her collection included a black wedding dress, left,

featuring a satin skirt with embroidered chignon bodice and spectacular headpiece. Head-gear also played a big part in some of her other creations. Clothing industry chiefs are optimistic about the

industry's future, despite the government paying £30,000 to underwrite half the week's costs. Roger Saul of Mulberry, which has 40 shops worldwide, said sensible pricing would be important this year.

Police quest to trace missing £4m delays Guppy sentence

By A STAFF REPORTER

SENTENCING of the convicted fraudster Darius Guppy and his business associate was unexpectedly delayed yesterday. Increased police efforts to trace up to £4 million thought to have been paid into Swiss bank accounts were believed to be the reason.

The development came as the pair returned to Squarebrook Crown Court, east London, where last month they were found guilty of a meticulously planned fraud centred on a bogus armed robbery in a New York hotel. Guppy, an Old Etonian, and his cousin, contemporary Benedict Marsh, were expected to be sentenced for that and separate VAT offences involv-

ing gold smuggled to India. After hearing the Crown describe the "web of deceit" surrounding their fraudulent claims for the repayment of nearly £200,000 VAT, John Kelsey-Fry, for Marsh, asked Judge Andrew Brooks to delay pronouncing the men's fate.

During the three-month insurance fraud trial it emerged that a large slice of the £1.8 million Lloyds of London paid out after the 1990 bogus hold-up and other large amounts swindled from the men's gem company had never been recovered.

As the defendants were led from the dock Guppy's wife, Patricia, who is pregnant, rushed to his side and kissed

him. She told him: "Don't forget to do what you said you would do. Darius, don't let me down." Guppy, who has spent over two weeks in Brixton prison since his conviction, had earlier mouthed across the court "I love you" to her. Guppy pleaded guilty to three charges relating to the illegal VAT claims between October 1989 and July 1990 and Marsh admitted one of the offences. Anthony Glass QC, for the prosecution, told the court the charges arose from forged export documentation produced to Customs and Excise by the two in an attempt to support a false story that they had been exporting gold to Switzerland.

Woman fights for life after assault

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

DETECTIVES were last night waiting at the bedside of a young mother fighting for her life after being sexually assaulted, clubbed unconscious and left to die on the Sussex Downs.

The woman, holidaying in Brighton with a friend, was found by a jogger after she had lain half-dressed in freezing weather all night at a beauty spot known as Poor Man's Corner above the town. She was last seen leaving a Brighton public house with a man late the night before. Yesterday Det. Supt Mich-

ael Bennison, leading the investigation, said: "This was a very sadistic attack. It was extremely violent and the attacker must be caught very quickly. The woman was very badly beaten and the prime concern at this moment is to save her life."

The 24-year-old woman was taken unconscious to the Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton, and later transferred to a neurological unit at Hurlwood Park Hospital, Haywards Heath. Her condition was serious but stable. She had severe head injuries, bruising over the rest of her body and may have been raped. She was also being treated for hypothermia. Police believe she was attacked close to where she was found.

The woman, who has two children, is unemployed. Detectives could not confirm whether she is married. Yesterday they were trying to contact relatives before releasing her name. She came to Brighton earlier this week with a friend from their home in Telford, Shropshire.

Jail term increased for rapist

A BURGLAR sentenced to seven years for the rape and manslaughter of a woman aged 61 had his jail term raised to 11 years yesterday.

The Court of Appeal allowed a plea by the attorney-general that the sentence passed on Raymond Oxborough, last September was unduly lenient. Oxborough, 30, of Leeds, pleaded guilty to burglary and rape and was convicted of manslaughter after a trial to decide whether his actions caused the woman's death three days after her ordeal.

Lord Justice Garland sentenced him to concurrent terms of seven years for manslaughter, three-and-a-half years for burglary and five years for rape.

Lord Chief Justice, said yesterday that the accepted starting point in sentencing for such a rape was eight years and there were aggravating features in Oxborough's case. The appeal judges substituted concurrent terms of nine years for rape and 11 years for manslaughter.

Teenager's love quest ends in deep water

By A STAFF REPORTER

A TEENAGER was so desperate to see a French schoolgirl he had fallen in love with that he stole a 10ft inflatable boat and tried to cross the Channel, a court was told yesterday.

David Burnett, a boatworker aged 18, planned to use a diary map to navigate across some of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. Ian Taylor, for the prosecution at Turo Crown Court, said that when Burnett came alongside a trawler 25 miles out from the English coast he asked: "Am I going in the right direction for France?"

The crew told him: "No. You are heading out into the Atlantic and the next landfall is Canada." The trawler took him in tow and brought him back to Falmouth, Cornwall, where he was arrested by police, the court was told.

"He met a French schoolgirl when she was on a study course in Falmouth and was keen to see her again, but the only way he could get across the Channel was to take a boat," Mr Taylor said. Burnett, of Falmouth, admitted taking the £3,200 inflatable from the Penryn river without consent. Sentence was adjourned.



PALE AND INTERESTING

WITH THE TIMES TOMORROW

The Saturday Review
Pale and interesting:
Tilda Swinton revealed
The forgotten gulag: the
Chinese still use torture
Bel Mooney: Where
novels come from
Jan Morris in Malta,
the Mediterranean mist

AND

Special skiing section:
downhill towards Easter
Weekend Times
Where to taste cut-price
burgundies today

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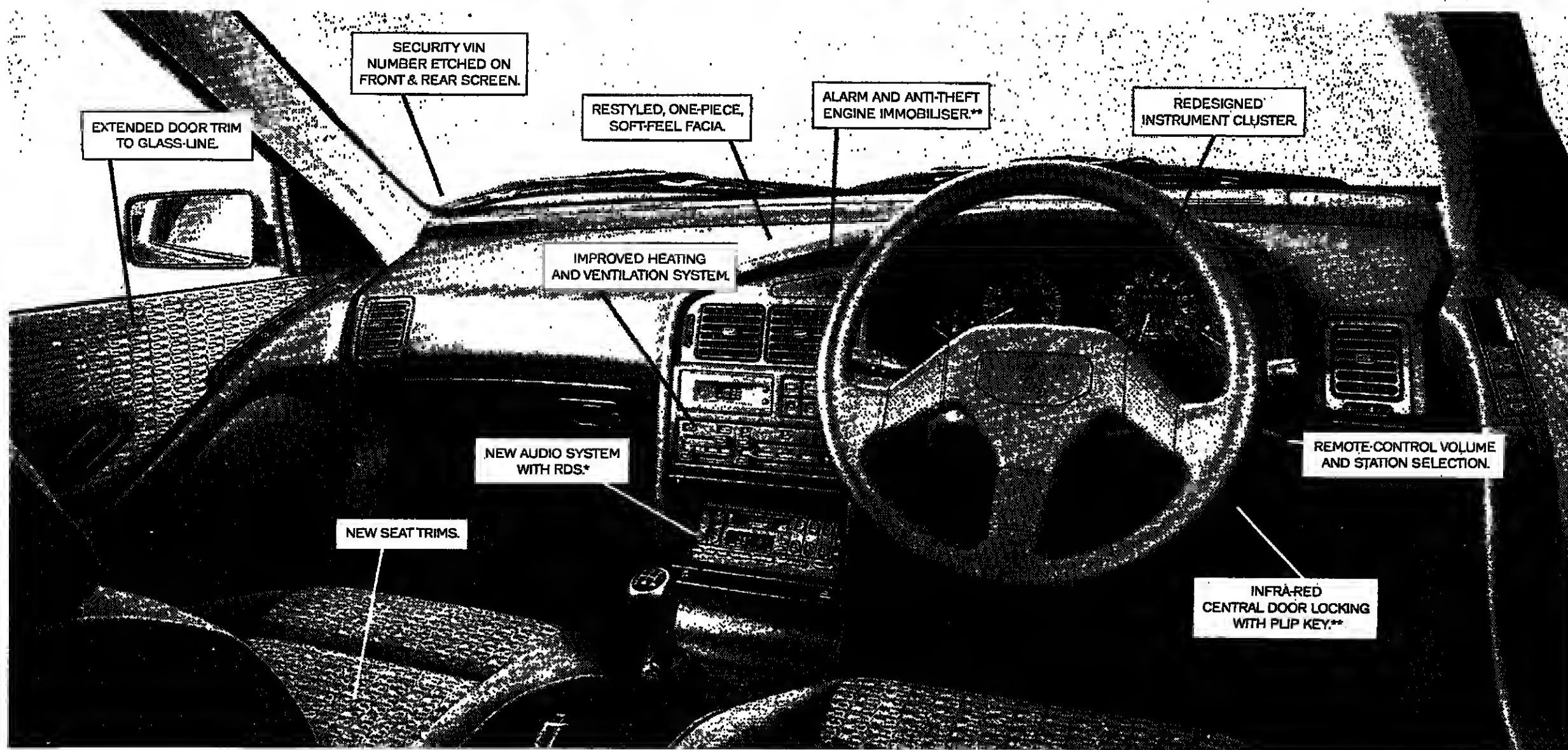
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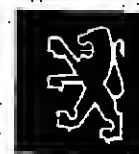
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credit card enq

Open heart
surgeon
questioned

1500
1500
1500

Unexplained fees head list of worries

Banks' conduct code fails to halt rise in customer complaints

By LOUISE HIDALGO

THE banks' code of conduct, launched last year amid much publicity, has failed to stop a flood of complaints from customers, and the situation is getting worse, a banking consumer group said yesterday.

Complaints against banks would run into "hundreds of thousands" if customers had an independent arbitrator, Stuart Cliffe, chairman of the Association of Bank Customers, said. Action can be taken only through the courts or the banking ombudsman.

The association has received thousands of calls in its eight months of operation, mostly about excessive or unexplained bank charges. The association could, on the basis of complaints made to it so far, present at least 10,000 cases for independent settlement in the next 12 months, Mr Cliffe said. "The figure nationally would run into hundreds of thousands," he said. "Confidence in banks and the banking ombudsman is very low."

The continued rise in complaints is confirmed by the banking ombudsman's office. Levels have shown little sign of abating since its annual report in December recorded a 60 per cent increase for 1992, to more than 10,000. Bank charges and interest rates headed the list of complaints. The addition last month of

small business customers to the ombudsman's brief is expected to cause a further rise.

Under the code drawn up last spring, banks are obliged to send customers their tariff of charges, and to warn them of any increases. It was hoped that this, and other changes, would cut complaints.

However, although the ombudsman can rule on cases of miscalculation or maladministration, he cannot rule on whether charges are excessive. "Banks may be passing on reductions in interest rates to customers, but they seem to be compensating through fees they charge," Mr Cliffe said.

Complaints to the association this week include a charge of £90 for a half-hour meeting with a bank manager to discuss opening a business account; an 11 per cent rise in charges on a small-business account under a new branch manager; and a customer being persuaded to convert an overdraft into a loan facility "under a similar arrangement" and being charged a £200 administration fee.

"Several of our 4,000 members have said they have never seen a tariff," Mr Cliffe said. Graeme Jacobs, of the Consumers' Association, whose report on bank charges last year showed that one in ten customers had been overcharged,

said that although charges were fixed, it was at the discretion of branches whether they were imposed. "It seems they almost pick on the customers least likely to complain," he said.

As Barclays Bank receded yesterday from record losses, its press office countered reports that it overcharged a small business customer. Hamid Majidi was reportedly charged £200, including £72 for a short meeting with a branch manager and £50 for four two-minute telephone calls, after going £200 over a £2,000 overdraft limit.

Barclays said the charge was for small business fees for a quarter. The £72 covered several hours' management time. "The manager was trying to keep penalties against the client to a minimum."

Barclays results, page 23



In the dog house: Raf, one of two German pointers trained to sniff out drugs at airports and alert security staff by sitting quietly by the suspect. Just after demonstrating such skills at Heathrow yesterday, Raf barked madly and excitedly found 7 kilos of cannabis

Privacy fear causes credit card enquiry

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

ANYONE can gain access to the personal details of National Westminster Bank credit card customers, armed with little more than their date of birth and account number.

Five months after the bank's security procedures were criticised, when account details belonging to Norman Lamont, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, were leaked, a fresh enquiry is under way into the bank's new Card Line service.

George Zmijewski, an independent computer security expert, said yesterday that he had been astounded at the laxity of the service's security.

"On Wednesday I got my NatWest credit card with a booklet. I dialled up and was amazed. You can get someone else's card number in all sorts of ways, and getting a date of birth is not hard, either," he said.

"There is nothing to stop me setting my computer to dial their computer and try up to 10,000 combinations," said Mr Zmijewski, who has carried out computer consultancy for the Bank of Wales.

"It really is a joke. They carry out an internal enquiry into how Norman Lamont's credit card details were released and yet with this service

you can find them out in ten seconds."

A study into the Card Line service is being carried out by the office of the Data Protection Registrar, which is examining the circumstances surrounding the leaking of the Chancellor's account details.

It is possible that the bank has broken the principles of the data protection laws. A spokesman for the office said: "It [the Card Line service] raises questions under the Data Protection Act as to whether appropriate security measures are being taken to prevent the release of information to the wrong person."

The service allows customers to dial a number and talk to a voice-activated computer that will disclose information such as a cardholder's credit limit and level of debt. Unlike a cashpoint card, the Card Line service requires no special number to gain access but a widely publicised authorisation code, 01.

The artificial voice asks a caller to speak or dial an account's credit card number and a six figure birth-date.

A spokesman for NatWest said it was looking into ways of making the service more secure without compromising its ease of use.

Open heart surgery questioned

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

OPEN heart surgery is no better at saving lives than simpler treatment, according to early results from the first big trial of its effectiveness.

But surgery is better at controlling chest pain and leads to fewer complications later, according to findings published in tomorrow's *Lancet*.

Coronary bypass surgery, developed 25 years ago, is being superseded by the less invasive technique of balloon angioplasty, which is simpler to perform, less painful and leads to quicker recovery.

The trial of 1,000 patients, organised by British cardiac specialists, looked at both techniques. The surgery is a major operation requiring a week's stay in hospital.

Angioplasty involves threading a tube through an artery in the groin up to the heart, where a small balloon is inflated to widen the constriction in the coronary artery. It may require only a day in hospital.

Results show that after two and a half years there was no difference in the death rate or subsequent heart attacks. However, nearly a third of the angioplasty group needed further hospital treatment, compared with only 5 per cent of the coronary bypass group.

Pollution hastens first sneeze

By OUR HEALTH SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

SUMMER may be months away but hay fever has already arrived, the result of the twin effects of global warming and car pollution.

The mild winter has encouraged trees to flower early, spraying pollen into streets bathed in nitrogen dioxide from car exhausts. Alder, hazel, yew and elm trees are festooned with buds at least two weeks ahead of normal, and there is even a grain or two of grass pollen in the air.

A combination of factors is responsible for the early flowering, according to Dr Jean Emberlin, director of the pollen research unit in London. "We had a spell of cold weather in December which the trees need to break their winter dormancy. If there is no cold spell they don't grow again. Then we had a burst of warmth in January which set them off. It is likely to be a severe season for people sensitive to birch pollen."

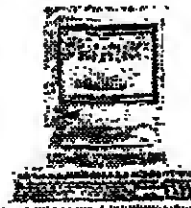
Studies show that pollutants from car exhausts worsen the symptoms of existing hay fever sufferers and predispose non-sufferers to develop the allergy. A survey by the environment department last year showed that nitrogen dioxide levels had increased by 35 per cent since 1986 "largely as a result of motor traffic growth".

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Catholic
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Cement
halts burial

Cardinal Hume: "This could be conversion of England for which we have prayed all these years"

Catholic bishops close to deal with Anglican rebels

BY RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

ROMAN Catholic bishops are close to agreeing a formula which could allow Anglican clergy opposed to the ordination of women to join the Catholic church while retaining their priesthood and elements of Anglican identity.

Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, believes he could be witnessing "the conversion of England, for which we have prayed all these years". He has twice met bishops in Leeds and Westminster and has had talks with a committee of four senior bishops. The Vatican has been kept informed.

Sources close to the bishops said they did not favour two of the suggestions put forward by the former Anglican bishop of London, Dr Graham Leonard. They do not favour a Uniate rite, as used by eastern Catholic churches which are in full communion with Rome while maintaining their original traditions; nor do they

The Roman Catholic Church is preparing a welcome for Church of England priests against the ordination of women

support the idea of a personal prelature, as used by the movement Opus Dei, which comes under the personal jurisdiction of the Pope and which is not defined territorially.

More likely is an agreement to allow the Anglican rite to operate within the diocesan structure of the Catholic church in England. The hurdle presented by the Vatican's refusal to accept the validity of Anglican orders could be overcome by "conditional" reordination. This would not deny the validity of past absolutions, eucharists and other sacraments carried out by the Anglican clergy, but would mean they were ordained properly as Catholic priests.

Dr Leonard said: "There is no question of a pact or an agreement. What I am hoping

is that Rome may come up with a proposal for us which we would then have to respond to. They are looking at and recognising our difficulties."

Cardinal Hume is understood to be sympathetic to Dr Leonard. In an interview in the Catholic weekly *The Tablet*, Cardinal Hume is quoted as saying: "This could be a big moment of grace, it could be the conversion of England, for which we have prayed all these years. I am terrified now we are going to turn round and say we do not want these newcomers. We have prayed for Christian unity and now it could be happening: a realignment of English Christianity so as to bring us closer together, in two blocs, instead of two lots of blocs."

The advice of the Vatican

will not be sought officially until the bishops' conference of England and Wales meets after Easter, when provisional plans are expected to be announced. Latest estimates suggest that between 500 and 1,000 priests could be interested in pursuing an acceptable "Roman option".

The Rev Peter Weatherby, vicar of St Werburgh, Burslem, Staffordshire, who is married with five children, said one member of his congregation supported women priests and all others were against.

The "Roman option", which could mean the loss of his £12,000 stipend and church building, will be discussed at the parochial church council next week, although like most Anglicans considering their future he will wait to see what is offered before making up his mind.

"We do not know quite what the terms would be. I suspect that my people would feel that the crucial thing is to be able to take the church building."



Considering the option: the Rev Peter Weatherby, with his wife, says he will wait and see what is on offer

Condon to streamline top ranks

BY STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

TOP and middle-ranking police officers at Scotland Yard face early retirement under a reorganisation plan drawn up by Paul Condon, the new Commissioner of the Metropolitan police, to put a thousand officers back on London's streets.

Mr Condon said changes to streamline policing would mean that older chief superintendents and superintendents could leave as well as commanders, deputy assistant commissioners and even several assistant commissioners.

Under the plan, Mr Condon will have a force run by five officers holding the rank of chief constable who will be answerable to a "Yard team" including Mr Condon and two or three senior officers.

The number of police divisions will be reduced from 69 to 50. Mr Condon said the changes were desirable for better management and finance.

He said: "We are saying that above police station level things need to be located on a needs basis and not because of common or established practice. It will be more difficult for Scotland Yard to stifle local plans or initiatives."

Mr Condon said he would be disappointed if the number of officers moved back to the streets does not reach 1,000 by the spring of next year. At least 700 are already earmarked to move.

Mr Condon said more officers on the streets would not immediately reduce crime but they would improve public confidence and allow for more direct action to prevent crime. He promised that one consequence will be a big reduction in burglaries this year.

The picture of crime in London was not as grim as has been painted recently, he said. He pointed out that figures for 1992 show that crime rose in London by only 1 to 2 per cent last year. Figures for January this year compared with January last year showed a drop of 4 per cent on all crime. Burglaries also showed a slight reduction.

Police chief fears panic reforms

BY OUR CRIME
CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S crime problems will be made worse if the government turns to panic measures to reform and reorganise policing, a chief constable claims today.

The call for a careful assessment of policing needs comes from Sir Roger Birch, chief constable of Sussex and a former leader of the Association of Chief Police Officers. Speaking at a conference on policing and local authorities, Sir Roger will urge Kenneth Clarke, the home secretary, to make changes based on rational thinking and research rather than in "an atmosphere of emotional and political reaction".

Sir Roger will argue that the current "panic" social problem behind present levels of crime that is outside the control of the police alone. Increasing crime is the result of moral degeneration, a lack of ethical standards, guidance and direction for the young and a failure by parents to teach children the difference between right and wrong.

Speaking as Mr Clarke prepares his first pronouncement on reform plans, Sir Roger will oppose restrictions on police work based on what he sees as narrow guidelines on productivity such as the number of 999 calls answered or arrests made.

He will speak against short-term contracts for junior officers which would damage morale and will argue that removing local accountability by changing police authorities would cut off police from the public. He will also reject proposals for centralising police funding.

Sir Roger, who retires later this year, will say that he is not opposed to change but urges caution. He will say reform should not affect the police only. Mr Clarke's own department and its bureaucracy could be examined. The Home Office's police department has little or no direct professional knowledge of the police service and this has caused a gulf between Whitehall and the police, he claims.

Cement lorry protest halts burial service

THE burial of a husband next to the wife he killed was halted yesterday when her brother blocked the entrance to the church with his concrete mixing lorry in protest.

As the funeral cortege found its way barred to St Peter's Church in the village of Lingwood, near Norwich, there was uproar among mourners and police were called.

The body of Kenneth Lynn was due to be buried next to his wife Paulette, whom he had stabbed to death seven years ago after she left him for her lover. Mr Lynn's dying wish was to lie beside the woman he had been married to for 25 years. However, after her years, however, after her brother, Bob Willmott, blocked the way, the priest called off the burial.

Another service will be arranged in the same cemetery, but in a fresh grave. Mr Lynn, who died last

week of natural causes, aged 57, had been sentenced to three years probation after admitting the manslaughter of his 47-year-old wife. He had tried to kill himself on a railway line after stabbing her but had survived.

The dead woman's mother, Ruby Willmott, 77, said: "How could I go and put flowers on her grave if he was there as well? It has made me feel sick."

Bob Willmott said: "The Church of England were quite prepared to bury him with my sister. It is disgraceful and it is simply not going to happen. Hopefully, my sister can now rest in peace."

The rector of Lingwood, the Rev Ivor Welch, said the situation was extremely difficult. "I have to minister to both parties," he said. The dead man's sons had been anxious to carry out his last wish.

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Economists are convinced Britain must stimulate manufacturing to escape the recession

Slump forces Tories to change tack on free-market policies

BY JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

JOHN Major and the Conservative party remain fond of the language of the free market. But the longest recession since the 1930s may now be pushing the government into a more active policy to boost manufacturing. It is not ideology but the force of economic logic that is forcing a change of approach.

An increasingly powerful group of economists — some now employed by the government as independent advisers — are in no doubt that the share of manufacturing in the British economy must be boosted, reversing the huge capacity loss of the early 1980s and a more modest, but still considerable, loss this time around.

They believe the *laissez-faire* policies which saw the Conservatives scrape home in the last election are no longer enough. The Liberal Democrats had a stab at a coherent industrial policy in their pre-election pamphlets and the Labour party offered a vaguely costed, but comprehensive and traditional, programme of capital allowances for investment, grants for research and development and a fully-fledged industrial regional policy.

The Conservative party, represented then by Peter Lilley at the Department of Trade and Industry, limited itself largely to enthusiasm about the free market, inward investment, a few science parks and a level

Although John Major denies a rift with Thatcherism, new economic circumstances are likely to prompt a change of approach

playing field in international trade. The phrase "manufacturing matters" crept into the pre-election rhetoric but there was still a stern resistance to corporatism or intervention. The danger signals from this policy are already there for all to see in the form of a huge current account deficit in the middle of a recession. Britons have gone on consuming imported goods at a rate which exceeds the capacity of manufacturing industry either to

'The government should use every kind of cheating used by other governments to promote their products'

supply them from the home market or to balance the national accounts with a large enough volume of exports. The car market, for example, into which Aston Martin's new DB7 is about to be launched, will hope to benefit from a pick-up in UK sales, but also needs to battle for export orders as Continental markets drift towards recession.

Bill Martin, chief economist of Phillips & Drew, believes

that the capacity of manufacturing industry is now so enervated that Britain can grow only at about 1.5 per cent a year without running into a balance of payments crisis. The problem is one of simple arithmetic while consumption has grown by about 30 per cent since the end of the 1970s, the capacity of manufacturing industry has remained static.

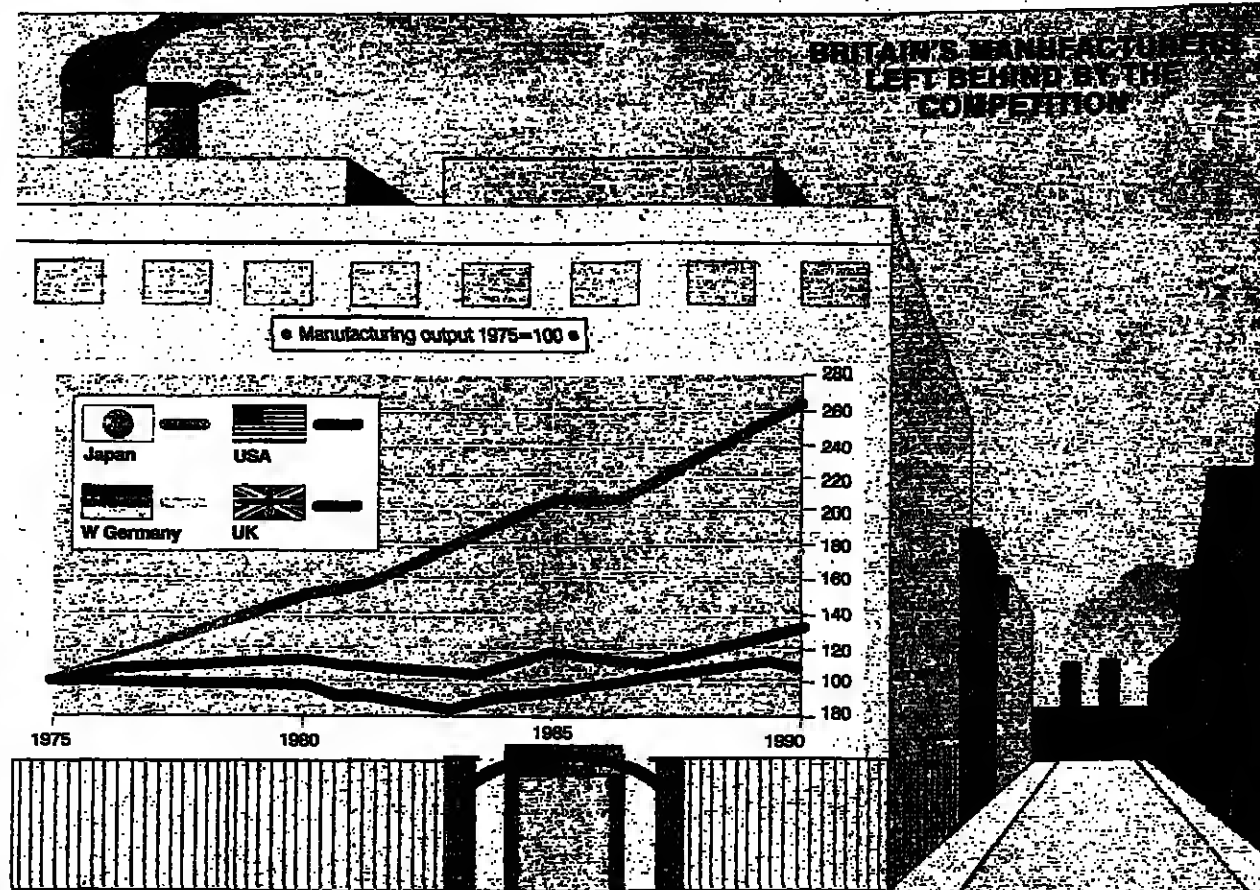
For this reason, Mr Martin — and many others — believe that recovery from recession this time must be led by investment and exports rather than by a revival in consumption. It is this balance which is relevant rather than a sterile, pseudo-emotional argument about the intrinsic value of nuts and bolts versus hair-dressing or theme parks.

Professor Wynne Godley, of the Cambridge Economic Policy Group, who was recently plucked from the Thatcherite wilderness to become one of the Treasury's new panel of independent forecasters (and therefore perhaps symbolic of the glimmerings of ideological change in Whitehall), believes the debate between manufacturing and services is a false one.

"If manufacturing employed only one man in a white coat working on a computer, but he was tremendously efficient and increased the volume of sales and exports and even dispensed with the need for imports, it would be fine for everybody else to be employed in service industries," he said. What matters is, quite literally, "paying our way in the world".

The force of the argument in favour of manufacturing now appears to be winning. But the question remains how much the government can do to reverse the decline which has been taking place since the war and which accelerated in the 1980s.

Some, notably Professor



Voices of industry: left to right, Sir David Lees, Howard Davies, Sir Michael Angus and Peter Morgan, who are calling for greater investment to spearhead a recovery driven by production and exports

Godley's companion on the Forecasting Panel, Professor Patrick Minford, believe that market forces work their own magic and that recovery from this recession will come naturally because workers with an eye on the unemployment queues "will price themselves into jobs and enable firms to price themselves into world markets".

An increasing number of others believe the government must reassume at least a facilitating role. For some, correctly setting the macro-economic levers would probably be enough to generate a revival in the tradable goods sector of the economy. Mr

Martin believes there should be two main policy aims: to improve competitiveness in the economy and to reduce consumption as a proportion of gross domestic product. The tools to achieve these would be a cheap exchange rate with a further substantial devaluation of the pound and tax rises to keep the consumer battered down.

There are ways in which the government could offer practical help on the margins. Professor Godley, also a proponent of further sterling devaluation (perhaps another 10 per cent) believes the government should, at least, offer an array of capital allowances on

investment. It should also, instead of what he calls "the insane stampede towards free markets", jump on the uneven playing field which reigns in Europe.

The EC is not a free trade system. What is the Common Agricultural Policy except monstrous protectionism? The British government should use every kind of cheating that other governments use to promote their products. We must learn to play this game of European crazy golf.

Beyond that, there is the perennial need for better education and training to boost the skills of the British workforce. That is the constant

mantra of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, run by Andrew Britton (another Forecasting Panel member).

All of this needs a long-term strategy and Mr Britton remains sceptical that the government has squared up to the challenges. He said: "John Major is clearly saying what industry wants him to say. It's a confidence-building exercise. But I have yet to hear anything concrete which turns this into policy rather than rhetoric."

Major's denial, page 1
Diary, page 16
Leading article, page 17

CBI calls for action to boost exports

By Derek Harris

BRITAIN'S industrialists are calling for better investment allowances, support for exporters and help for small businesses in the Budget to back the prime minister's plea for a stronger manufacturing base. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) says that 43 British companies already appear among the biggest 500 in the world — against only 33 from Germany — but there are many more average performers that could be brought up to world class.

Howard Davies, the CBI's director general, said yesterday: "We need an export and production-led recovery, otherwise we will quickly run up against a balance of payments restraint, as the prime minister now recognises. I hope the Treasury is listening. What we need now is some action on export support."

The CBI has set a target for British manufacturers to capture at least another 1 per cent of the world market for manufactured goods. That would eliminate Britain's trade deficit, according to the CBI, whose national manufacturing council has called for a partnership for action between industry, the financial community and the government.

The CBI admits that industry can do more to turn into a genuine partnership the relationship between manufacturers and sources suppliers of raw materials and components.

More investment into the UK from abroad was called for by Peter Morgan, director general of the Institute of Directors (IoD). Foreign investment had enabled Britain to become a net exporter of television sets and other electronic equipment, he said. Similar success could be enjoyed in car manufacturing, especially if Mazda could be attracted to Britain in the tracks of Nissan and Toyota.

"Mr Morgan said: "We must ensure that the deregulation programme and the tax structure are designed to remove all obstacles to such investment."

He welcomed Mr Major's emphasis on the need to broaden the country's industrial base as the way to tackle its deficits in trade and employment.

It was down to manufacturers to turn out more products and exploit more markets, Mr Morgan said. He added: "We are getting very good at producing what we are doing in a lean and mean fashion; but the issue now is to produce more things." It was also necessary to encourage the creation and growth of small businesses.

Sir David Lees, chairman and chief executive of GKN, who chairs the CBI's economics committee, is leading a campaign for the government to raise industrial investment allowances to 40 per cent.

Another area which particularly needs government intervention, according to Sir Michael Angus, president of the CBI and deputy chairman of British Airways, is unfair competition in the European Community.

Tactful silence conceals the cabinet dissidents

"APART from the Budget-making process, and of course the political matters we discussed at ministerial prayer meetings, he chose not to contribute to the discussion of any Treasury matter which did not have a public expenditure dimension." So wrote Nigel Lawson about John Major, his then deputy and chief secretary to the Treasury, in his *The View from Number 11*.

The row about whether the recent Mr Major was a secret dissident — a CBI *refusenik* — in the 1980s over the Thatcher government's views on manufacturing is really much ado about nothing. However, it highlights the prime minister's real views and the extent to which even senior ministers can dissent.

The relative share of manufacturing in the economy has been declining for some time in Britain, as in other countries. In the 1980s, manufacturing was under pressure as a result of what Lord Lawson of Blaby described as "the crowding-out effect of North Sea oil", which pushed up the pound and made exports less competitive.

An impression developed during the 1980s that manufacturing did not merit special attention relative to other sectors such as services. That was partly because of a reaction against the 1970s type of intervention in industry. So government had to be seen to be hands-off.

The main advocates of the government line were Lord Lawson and Lord Young of Graffham. Baroness Thatcher herself was always something of a mercantilist, keen to support British manufacturing companies in gaining overseas contracts.

Mr Major did have doubts about the prevailing Treasury orthodoxy, but these were confined to murmurings in private discussions. He did not raise the issue more openly with Lady Thatcher, though in the 1989-90 period he did have talks with some colleagues, including Sir Geoffrey Howe, who was by then Leader of the Commons, but the matter went no further.

From June 1987, when he

MODEL CONFIDENCES

entered the cabinet, until November 1990, when he became prime minister, Mr Major was a model of public loyalty and discretion. That was why he won the sponsorship and support of Lady Thatcher. She did not realise his doubts about some of her policies.

Even in private, Mr Major only signalled reservations about the poll tax, which he always recognised would end in expensive tears, and about European policy.

After he was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, he became persuaded in the first half of 1990 of the desirability — on political as much as economic grounds — of entry into the exchange-rate mechanism. It was pres-



Lawson: an advocate of hands-off policy

sure from Mr Major and Douglas Hurd that forced Lady Thatcher to accept the case for entry.

With rare exceptions, such as Tony Benn in the second half of the 1970s and Peter Walker during the 1980s, there are limits to how far senior ministers can openly dissent while remaining in a cabinet.

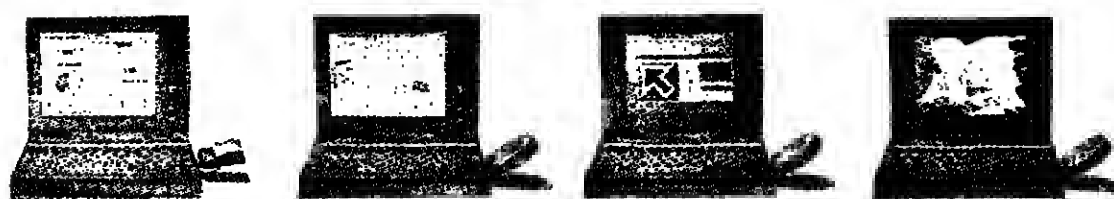
In general, ministers go along with the majority view and keep at least semi-silent unless an issue is of supreme importance. Even Lady Thatcher did not reveal her doubts about the Heath administration's U-turn on economic and industrial policy until after the Tories lost office in 1974. She was no cabinet dissident; her public conver-

sion to monetarism came later. Mr Major himself knows that a few of his cabinet colleagues, such as Michael Portillo and Peter Lilley, would hardly be mortified if the government failed to ratify the Maastricht treaty. But they are publicly loyal and recognise Mr Major's political need for the bill to be approved.

All that yesterday's short-lived Westminster squall shows is that cabinets are not unanimous in their views but that, generally, senior ministers keep their doubts quiet until later, especially if they want to lead their parties.

PETER RIDDELL

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East coast braced for tidal assault on battered sea defences

By TIM JONES

HOUSEHOLDERS along the east coast of England were yesterday preparing flood defences against a tidal surge of the North Sea. Some are considering moving inland if strong winds twist in from the north to pile up water against newly repaired sea defences.

Today, senior officials of the Meteorological Office's storm tide warning service will run a computer model of weather patterns to assess the risk to coastline from the Humber to the Thames estuaries.

The predictions were yesterday pointing to benign southerly winds. But forecasters conceded they could not discount the threat of a tide surge storm.

Chris Birks, the head of flood defence at the National Rivers Authority (NRA), said: "We have invested vast amounts of money in flood defences during the past 40 years and they are in reasonable condition. But it is not inconceivable that a worse storm than they are designed for could occur."

Spring tides will be exceptionally high on March 10

and 11 because a full moon will be close to Earth. The gravitational strength of the moon will also be increased because of the equinox.

Mr Birks said: "If there are no high winds the people in eastern England could well see lower tides next week than they did during the localised flooding on February 21."

Richard Austin, the postmaster at Aldeburgh, in Suffolk, which was flooded two weeks ago by a classic

surge, said: "People are perturbed by the possibility of an even worse combination of wind and tide. The community seems to be divided, with half the people saying there is not enough information while others consider the authorities are being too cautious. Elderly people living on the sea front are particularly troubled, and although sandbags look effective they are no real defence."

Chris Ramsden, an engineer with the National Rivers Authority, said: "If these tides combine with a surge of the kind that occurred last month, then sea defences would be breached."

If that happens, a sophisticated and well-practised emergency plan will be put into action to cover almost 1,000 miles of sea defences, including hundreds of water gates that would be shut hours before the surge hit shore.

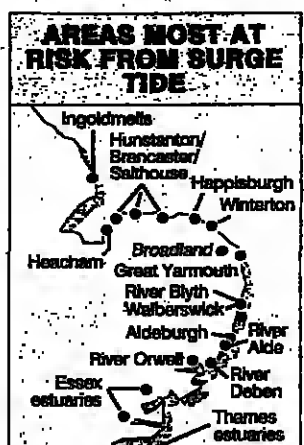
Once an unstoppable surge was confirmed, emergency control officers from the NRA, county councils and the police would immediately begin their safety procedures.

If it appeared likely that flood defences would be breached, the warnings would go through various stages until reaching the critical "flood arouse" and red "flood alarm".

Peter Daly, emergency planning officer for Norfolk county council, said: "We are keeping our fingers crossed that the current weather patterns will remain, but if a surge occurs we would expect plenty of warning to put our plans into action."

These include volunteers who would stand near danger points to report on possible breaches and in extreme cases the sounding of old wartime civil defence sirens to warn people to evacuate their homes.

Three operational centres in the country would be opened to co-ordinate the emergency effort and they would receive constant updates from the storm tide warning service.



Land sinks under legacy of Ice Age

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE threat of high tides comes at a time of growing debate over the future of Britain's flood defences. Greatest concern is over the low-lying eastern and south-eastern parts of the country, where the coast is slowly sinking into the sea as the land mass recovers its equilibrium after the last Ice Age. Global warming could further increase the danger of flooding.

Britain has 1,375 miles of sea defences, including concrete walls, earth banks and groynes. About 15 per cent of these need repair, according

to a National Rivers Authority survey. Building a new hard sea wall can cost up to £5 million a mile. In 1992-3 the government spent £32 million on flood defence.

There is growing support for the view that it does not make sense to maintain all these defences, particularly where they protect low-lying land remote from towns.

In some areas, scientists say, sea walls have done more harm than good. Salt marshes and mudflats, which act as flood defences by dissipating the force of the waves, have been eroded as they have been "squeezed" between the sea and fixed defences.



Queen of the dance: Anna Pavlova in *Dying Swan*, left, in *The Russian Dance*, above right, and at home

Russia asks to take home Pavlova

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE Russian government is asking for the return of the ashes of the ballerina Anna Pavlova, which are kept in a London crematorium.

Pavlova died in her sleep in The Hague in 1931 after a heart complaint forced her to abandon planned performances there. Victor Dandré, her widower with whom she had lived at Ivy House in

North End Road, Golders Green, for almost 20 years, arranged to bring her body back to Britain. At Golders Green crematorium in north-west London Pavlova's urn, draped with her satin ballet shoes, draws more visitors than the nearby ashes of two other celebrities, Sigmund Freud and Ivor Novello.

A spokesman for the crematorium said yesterday that the Russian claim for Pavlova's return was being investigated. The ballerina was born in St Petersburg in 1885, attended the Imperial Ballet school there, and started performing with the Mariinsky Theatre.

Outside Russia, her career was most closely linked with Britain. Her international fame was established at the Palace Theatre in London in 1910 when she was dancing with Nijinsky for Diaghilev.

She made her home in London, chose many of her dancers for her own company there, and danced in almost every city in Britain.

Harvey Thomas, a director of the crematorium, said: "We are not sure if the ashes can be moved. I am attempting to trace relatives. Pavlova did not have children and did not leave a will. The board will make a decision after I have made my report."

Adolescents hold key to successful evolution

By MICHAEL MCCARTHY

ADOLESCENCE, often seen as a time of acne, emotional anxiety and sometimes delinquent behaviour, has been a key ingredient in humanity's evolutionary success, a leading anthropologist suggests in this week's *New Scientist*.

The growth spurt between puberty and adulthood exists in no other animal species, not even apes, according to Professor Barry Bogin of Michigan University.

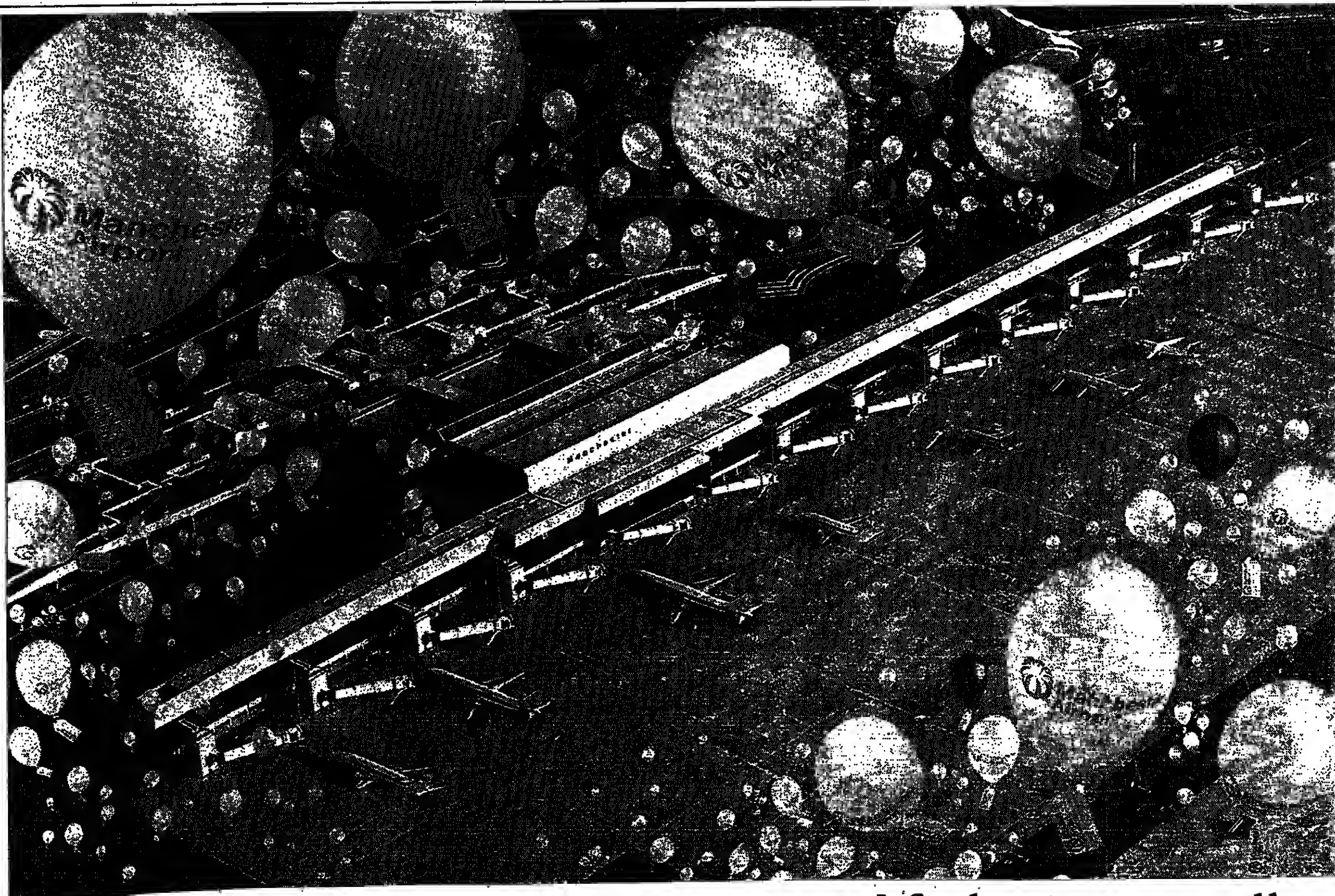
He said that adolescence has, for thousands of generations, allowed human beings to acquire their social roles as progenitors and parents uniquely well, offering girls time to learn and boys time to make mistakes.

The physical changes brought on by the growth spurt occur between the ages of ten and 17 in girls, advertising their sexual maturity and, in traditional societies, making adult women include them in their social circle. There they can learn extensively about sexual behaviour and child care. But the changes happen before the pelvis is the optimum size for childbearing, about the age of 19. This offered a long learning period.

In boys the growth spurt occurs between 12 and 21 and they do not start to look like men until well after they are fertile. Professor Bogin suggested that in traditional societies this allowed boys to practise being men in safety, without appearing as competitors for women to older and stronger men.

The result is greater reproductive success compared with other species: primitive hunter-gatherers lose about 44 per cent of their first-born children as infants, but baboons, macaque monkeys and chimpanzees lose up to 60 per cent.

Professor Bogin said yesterday that it was only the diminishing importance of family-centred societies after the Industrial revolution that removed the need for adolescents to learn and made the period a time of difficulty.



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Cabinet rivals on course for clash over energy taxes

By Nicholas Wood and Philip Webster

MICHAEL Howard and Kenneth Clarke are on a collision course over long-term taxation policy.

The two cabinet ministers, widely regarded as Westminster's chief rivals for the Chancellor's job if Norman Lamont is sacked after the Budget, are at odds over the proposals for energy taxes aimed at halting the spiralling public sector deficit and curbing pollution.

After talks in Washington earlier this week with Al Gore, the vice-president, and other leading environmentalists in President Clinton's administration, the environment secretary has been reinforced in his enthusiasm for the controversial idea.

However, the home secretary is understood to be strongly opposed to higher taxes on petrol and other fuels. He believes that such moves, under consideration for the second Budget in November, would drive up costs in a way that the country cannot afford as it struggles to escape the three-year recession. He has told friends that new energy taxes could send unemployment climbing well beyond three million.

Although the dispute has apparently yet to come to a head in the cabinet, the battle

lines are being drawn up between the champions on the right and the left for the Chancellorship. Some MPs will regard the clash as one saying more about their political rivalry than about the issues involved. Mr Howard and Mr Clarke are also at odds over the home secretary's proposals to strip local authorities of their responsibilities for supervising the police.

Speaking on his return to Britain after his trip to America, Mr Howard indicated that green taxes, covering petrol and other fuels, were under active consideration.

One of President Clinton's first acts in office was to propose a tax on the heat content of fuels as a key element in reducing the federal budget deficit. It is projected to raise an extra £33 billion over the next four years, adding about £12 a month to the tax bill of the average middle income family.

In an interview with *The Times*, Mr Howard said: "I discussed the proposed energy tax with all the people I met. The general view was that it will get through Congress. We are continuing to examine the proposals for a tax that have been brought forward by the European Community."

But Mr Howard faces oppo-

sition within the cabinet. One of his colleagues questioned this week whether he had "gone native" at the environment department.

Mr Lamont is closer to the environment secretary's view. Although he has little enthusiasm for the idea, he is understood to believe that if Britain is to meet the targets set at last June's Rio Earth Summit, it will have to increase its energy taxes. The unspoken attraction of such a move is that it would provide a politically defensible justification for squeezing public sector borrowing.

The United Nations framework Convention on Climate Change committed EC countries and the US to reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to 1990 levels by the year 2000. The EC's plans for a carbon tax will be discussed by environment ministers in Brussels towards the end of this month. One stumbling block so far has been Europe's insistence that it would not introduce energy taxes without parallel moves by the rest of the industrialised world. Whitehall sources said that while the American move might not meet all the European requirements, it was a "great milestone" along this path.

Morris deals a blow to rebels

By Nicholas Wood and Sheila Gunn

TORY Euro-sceptics and their Labour allies suffered a setback when an amendment threatening the Maastricht treaty was ruled out of order.

Michael Morris, the deputy Speaker, told the Commons that "after due reflection" amendment 443, deleting the social protocol from the bill, was out of order.

Calum MacDonald, the Labour MP who had tabled the amendment with the support of his frontbench, said that he was disappointed but accepted the ruling as final.

The latest twist in the Maastricht saga did little to dispel the atmosphere of intrigue and speculation at Westminster. Leading Euro-sceptics pointed out that Mr Morris had yet to rule on two other social chapter amendments from the opposition parties. They were confident that he would eventually grant a new debate on the social chapter and that a wrecking amendment would be found that would lead to a showdown between the government and its opponents.

The Tory Euro-rebels were also heartened by last night's meeting of the 1922 executive, which shied away from demands by some government loyalists for resignations.

The executive spent about 30 minutes in a "combative discussion" over whether five



Plugging the gaps: Michael Morris, the deputy Speaker, helps to keep the Maastricht treaty alive

of its members, including Sir George Giddens and Sir Rhodes Boyson, should stand down rather than continue to defy the whips in procedural votes. The Euro-sceptic camp said that the meeting had ended with general agreement that the question of resignations did not arise. It is understood that the five precedents to a series of precedents under which executive mem-

bers had stayed on the committee while opposing the government in substantive and procedural votes. At the meeting of the full 1922 committee there was no repetition of last week's "ambush" of the anti-Maastricht camp.

Government business managers were last night bargaining about a vote, which was likely to be on a procedural motion,

expected either later in the night or on Monday that could expose the government to further dangers.

In the Commons, George Robertson, Labour's European spokesman, asked where MPs now stood with other amendments that might relate to the social chapter. Amendment 27, which is no longer viewed as a wrecking device, is still on the table.

Mr Morris said: "We are still some way off having to even consider anything about amendment 27. There are from all sides of the House attempts to produce amendments in that broad area."

"It would be wrong of me to make a judgment at this point of time as to whether or not how many other amendments there might be by that time," he said.

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Labour acts to end council jobs row

By Gillian Bowditch
SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR yesterday moved to end undemocratic practices by party officials in Monklands, after serious allegations of corruption and malpractice in John Smith's political back yard. Allegations of a "Monklands mafia" running a "jobs for the boys" racket in the local council have dogged Mr Smith and Tom Clarke, the shadow Scottish secretary, whose constituencies cover the area.

A Labour party report into Monklands admits that practices within the local party and the district council have laid the local Labour group open to criticism.

The most serious of the criticisms included allegations of nepotism, sectarianism and financial ineptitude. Local councillors were alleged to have given preferential treatment to friends, family and local Labour supporters in allocating council jobs. Nearly 30 relatives of councillors were said to be on the town hall payroll, and special green job application forms were said to have been handed out to preferential job candidates.

Anne McGuire, chairman of the party in Scotland, headed the enquiry, which was ordered by Labour's Scottish executive in September last year. The report's recommendations are designed to "restore credibility and to renew confidence in the local party in Monklands". Ms McGuire said it was impossible to say whether or not jobs were awarded on merit, but the committee was unhappy about councillors being involved in appointing employees at all levels, including very junior staff.

The report recommends that councillors be involved in selection procedures of senior staff only. It recommends the appointment of an independent recruitment consultant to look at council recruitment practices.

Although the committee took evidence from Mr Smith and Mr Clarke, who was proved of Monklands in 1975, neither MP has been prepared to speak about the allegations of malpractice in their political heartland. But the allegations have been a source of embarrassment to the Labour leader at a time when he is calling for greater democracy within his party.

AROUND THE LOBBY

Prize for pools firms

The government bowed to pressure yesterday to allow football pools coupons to be available in shops and other outlets, as well as reducing from 18 to 16 the age of those eligible to enter (Arthur Leathley writes).

Peter Lloyd, the Home Office minister, has amended the national lottery bill after pools promoters pressed the Home Office for wider opportunities to distribute coupons to enable them to compete more equally.

Press plea

Any future press complaints body should also promote press freedom, Sir Louis Blom-Cooper, the last chairman of the Press Council, told the Commons national heritage select committee yesterday. His comments directly conflict with the recommendations of the second Calcutt report into press regulation.

Help denied

Virginia Bottomley, the health secretary, has warned health officials that she will ignore pleas for emergency help to hospitals which are turning away patients after running out of money.

Rate mail

Now that interest rates have fallen, half the post received at the Treasury is in favour of them being higher rather than lower, Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, said at question time.

MPs' tribute

MPs paid tribute to Dermot Englefield, the Commons librarian, who is to retire in September after nearly 40 years service. He will be succeeded by his deputy, Jennifer Tanfield.

In Parliament

Commons (9.30): Debate on crime and crime prevention.

PARLIAMENT NEXT WEEK

House of Commons:
Monday: European community (amendment) bill, committee, 15th day.
Tuesday: Debate on Opposition motion on manufacturing industry and unemployment.
Wednesday: Motion to renew Prevention of Terrorism Act.
Thursday: European community (amendment) bill, committee, 16th day.

Friday: Debate on backbencher's motion on the economy.
House of Lords:
Monday: EC fraud debate.
Tuesday: Housing and urban development bill, committee, first day. Penalty for murder bill, committee.
Wednesday: Debate on trade deficit in food and drink.
Thursday: Asylum and immigration appeals bill, third reading.

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Bosnia airdrops offer training for America and way in for Russia

By Roger Boyes



Clinton: keen for Russia to join aid operation

CONTROL of the ground, of the narrow mountain passes, the dirt roads counts for more in Bosnia than command of the skies. That was the defiant message delivered to America by the Serb soldiers who attacked the Cerska enclave soon after a humanitarian airdrop in the area.

The military logic of the Balkans has favoured the brigand and the partisan since Roman days. Even the most modern fighting force needs secure access roads for his supplies and in Bosnia-Herzegovina, at least, every road is vulnerable. With their long memory, that stretches far beyond the Chetnik partisan

tactics of the second world war, the Serb irregulars have calculated that the American airdrops pose no real threat to their campaign of starving out Muslims.

One Serb military analyst has calculated that America would have to fly three or four transport aircraft over Bosnia for 60 consecutive nights to deliver the equivalent of the aid carried by ten 40-tonne lorries. As long as the Serbs can block the passage of the land convoys, they will be able to hold sway over the lives of the Muslims under siege.

Airdrops do make some kind of sense for the West, however. In military terms,

■ Serb fighters blocking aid convoys can afford to ignore US anger. Once Moscow gets involved, the situation will change

they are giving the US forces useful pre-combat experience, acquainting air crews with the terrain and slowly removing the nervousness felt by most Nato allies about the reputed ferocity of the Serbian army. Politically, the airdrops show that America is involved in the Balkans and that it may be ready to take on other military supported action. It is this suspicion — that airdrops may be merely a warm-up for some form of military intervention — that will give America political

clout at the negotiating table. In a situation where no Western power seems able to influence Serbian policy, the muted threat of a future war may at least secure some compliance.

Russian involvement in the airdrop is a different matter altogether. Throughout the present troubles, and especially since President Clinton and his administration were sworn in, there has been a determination to keep the Russians on the Western side. There

were legitimate worries that if Moscow were kept out of Nato's Balkan strategy, the Russians would revert to their 19th-century loyalties and join forces with their brother Slavs in Serbia. Indeed, the many Balkan "friendship" treaties that have been signed over the past few months have span a similar to the pattern at the turn of the century. The political challenge — how to prevent Russia resuming an imperial role abroad while at the same time keeping it part of a global security system — has clouded Western perceptions of what Russia is really up to.

The Russian airdrop is a case in point. Two Ilushin-76 transport planes are expected

to arrive at the US Rhein-Main base next week and USAF officers will soon be working out the details of a joint mission with the Russians. That, on the face of it, seems sensible: the Serbs are clearly not going to shoot at Russian planes if they come flying in low to deliver aid. At home, the Russian government can tell sceptical nationalists that the food and medicine drops are for Serbs as well as Muslims. Further, relations with the Clinton administration will have got off to a good start: an easy, low-cost gesture.

Russia, however, has a far bigger responsibility in the Balkans. Moscow, and Moscow alone among foreign

states, has the power to influence Belgrade. "If Moscow exerted its full diplomatic power, and did so consistently, the land convoys would be allowed through tomorrow," a senior Western diplomat said. That overstates the position, but it is plain that Russia is entering the airdrop scheme so as to avoid difficult, but necessary, decisions in Serbia.

Meanwhile, there are continuing reports of Russian arms deals with Belgrade, a great deal of Russian sanctions breaking and frequent visits to Serbia by Russian military experts. If Russia really wants to help, then it can best do so by influencing those who control the snowbound tracks leading into eastern Bosnia.

Serb leaders offer safe passage for besieged Muslims

FROM ADAM LEBOR IN BELGRADE AND JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

BOSNIAN Serb commanders have agreed in principle to allow temporary safe passage out, under United Nations auspices, for tens of thousands of Muslims trapped in the besieged enclaves of Cerska, Zepa and Srebrenica. UN peacekeepers in Belgrade said yesterday.

At the same time, UN relief workers in the northern city of Tuzla, which is controlled by the Bosnian government, are bracing themselves for a huge new influx of refugees after the apparent fall of Cerska, and they expect further attacks on the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica. UN Protection Force officers have negotiated a provisional agreement between General Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb commander, and Ejup Ganic, the vice-president of Bosnia-Herzegovina, to open corridors for a period of 24 hours over a weekend for civilians to flee.

The corridors will be monitored by UN military observers and Bosnian Serb officers. A UN spokesman in Belgrade said: "Corridors would be kept open for 24 hours, but nothing has been signed."

In New York, meanwhile, Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance were pushing hard yesterday to get the Bosnian Muslims to accept the final part of their peace plan so that they can focus international pressure on the Bosnian Serbs. The two mediators were pressing Alija Izetbegovic, president of the Muslim-led Bosnian government, to follow his acceptance of the peace plan's military arrangements on Wednesday with an agreement to the map dividing the republic into ten semi-autonomous provinces.

The Serbs, who have not accepted the map, would then be isolated as the only one of the three warring sides in Bosnia not to have signed all three elements of the Owen-Vance plan: the constitutional principles, the military arrangements and the map. The plan is to get Izetbegovic to put his signature to the map and then to bring the thing to the security council to bring

maximum pressure on the Serbs," a diplomat said.

The security council could then pass a resolution demanding that the Serb side accept the peace plan, and the Western powers could tighten sanctions and possibly take limited military action to force Serb co-operation.

President Izetbegovic and Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, were threatening to abandon the talks and leave New York yesterday. It was not clear if they would yield to a security council demand that they remain "fully engaged in New York".

Lord Owen and Mr Vance were still hoping to win accep-

Sofia warns mercenaries

Sofia, Bulgaria said it would prosecute any citizens involved in the war in former Yugoslavia, after widespread reports that some, especially veterans of UN peacekeeping operations, were acting as mercenaries and volunteers. The reports did not say how many people were allegedly involved, but indicated that most were fighting on the Serb side against Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. (AP)

tance of their map dividing Bosnia into provinces under a weak central government. Over the past few days, they have conducted "village-by-village" discussions with the Bosnian Muslims and Croats on possible amendments. However, the Muslim-led government has floated alternatives of its own, including an idea to increase the number of provinces from ten to 13, including three that would be run for a time by international governors.

In Bosnia, UN relief officials say they cannot yet comment on allegations that the plan to open an escape corri-

dor is a form of "ethnic cleansing" by default, apparently endorsed by the UN. If and when the plan is put into action, it could quickly trigger accusations that the UN is providing an umbrella of respectability for the Bosnian Serb campaign forcing Muslims out of eastern Bosnia.

One senior aid worker said the UN was faced with either allowing "trapped civilians to die or aiding and abetting 'ethnic cleansing'".

A fleet of 11 converted ambulances trying to reach the village of Konjevic Polje where thousands of Muslims are said to have fled and which was targeted by the fourth US airdrop, was still trapped last night on the border between Serbia and Bosnia. Bosnian Serb commanders have refused it entry, Lyndall Sachs, UN spokesman in Belgrade, said. The convoy had been sent on Wednesday after a request from Bosnian government authorities. UN officials are negotiating passage for the ambulance convoy as well as access into Konjevic Polje and passage into Tuzla for the expected rush of refugees, Ms Sachs said.

UN officials in Tuzla are preparing for a huge influx of refugees into a city that already is home to tens of thousands of refugees. The exodus could be the biggest since the fall of Jajce last autumn, when 28,000 people were reported to have left the region.

Ms Sachs said: "We are planning for the worst. We expect a large proportion of any exodus to head for Tuzla and we are preparing for a very large number. It is better to be over-prepared."

At the same time, the Bosnian Serb army command in Zvornik said that all Muslims in the Konjevic Polje region could leave safely, the Belgrade-based news agency Tanjug said. The Serb side will even provide transport and "does not want innocent people to suffer".

Mass grave, page 1



Young warriors: two Sarajevo children armed with wooden guns clambering over a UN armoured personnel carrier

US dismay grows after aid triggers bloody response

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

THERE was growing dismay in Washington yesterday that President Clinton's humanitarian airdrops over eastern Bosnia may have provoked the savage new Serbian outbreak of "ethnic cleansing" against Muslim enclaves.

A sense of frustration was also expressed over the limits of American power. At his first full meeting of the National Security Council since taking office, Mr Clinton reviewed options for tightening the existing UN economic sanctions against Belgrade. There will be renewed consultations with allies, especially about arms smuggling along the Danube.

As a candidate, Mr Clinton said the legitimacy of "ethnic

cleansing cannot stand" and argued forcefully for the US to consider arming the Bosnian Muslims and bombing the Serbs. As president, he has found there is no appetite for his campaign ideas at the Pentagon, in Congress, among allies or with the American people. A White House official who described Mr Clinton as "very worried" by the new Serb aggression said the chances of unilateral US military intervention were virtually zero. The president had accepted that airdrops were his only option. But even these missions of mercy have led to accusations of poor planning from Congress. Misgivings are also apparent among military planners led by General Colin Powell.

On Capitol Hill, Republican Senator Mitch McConnell complained: "Desperate civilians are being gunned down trying to retrieve the 30 percent of the supplies that hit the target area. I don't think the airdrops have brought us one step closer to easing the suffering." Another Republican, Senator Don Nickles, declared there was no sense in sending aid to the aggressors. "A military operation should have definite objectives and this seems to be more symbolic," he said.

On the Democratic side, Senator Patrick Leahy acknowledged that the problem is not an easy one for Mr Clinton to resolve. He said: "I share the sense of frustration everybody else has. In a 10,000ft airdrop, I don't know how much is getting to the people." Officially, the administration rejects the idea

that the airdrops have caused the upsurge of warfare in eastern Bosnia. Richard Boucher, State Department spokesman, said: "We think the notion that humanitarian airdrops would somehow occasion more fighting is ludicrous. Our assessment is that the aid continues to play a useful role for people who truly need it." White House officials reiterated that the airdrops will continue.

In the early hours of yesterday a fourth mission by the US air force dropped supplies near Konjevic Polje. This is where many thousands of refugees have fled from Cerska, site of an airdrop earlier in the week that coincided with the final Serb assault on the town. Ham radio operators said the latest aid landed close to Serbs.

Albania dreams up beach paradise

By Eve-Anne Prentice, Diplomatic Correspondent

AND now for something completely different — a holiday in a country that millions of people have spent decades trying to flee.

Albania, one of the last bastions of Stalinism to fall and which until recently tried to stop its citizens owning boats in case they tried to row to freedom, wants to establish an up-market version of the Costa del Sol along its coastline.

The government of Aleksander Meksi, the prime minister, passed a tourism law in January to pave the way for the development of three or four resorts along Albania's dramatic mountainous coast. It will literally be paving the way: flying over Albania on a clear day is like passing over a moonscape with its dearth of made-up roads. But the Adriatic laps some of the most beautiful sandy beaches in Europe along its shoreline.

Moves to entice wealthy Europeans to Albania, the continent's poorest country, also include a new airport and the building of hotels in the capital, Tirana. A new road is planned between the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia and the Albanian coast.

The tourism scheme has lured the interest of the European Bank for Recon-

struction and Development, set up to help in modernising the economies of former communist countries. Mario Salsano, a merchant banker, is in the country this week discussing the ambitious scheme on behalf of the bank.

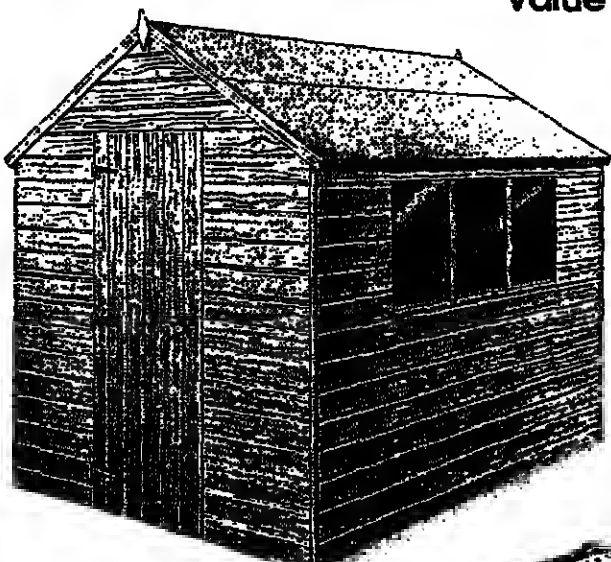
Claudio Vizzoli, the official in charge of the bank's dealings with Albania, said yesterday: "It will definitely not be for mass tourism, but the eventual atmosphere will depend strongly on the tour operators. We are looking for a well known operator — and we are talking to one in particular — to help in this project."

The bank helped the government to draft the tourism law, which has established a committee chaired by Osman Shkupi, the tourism minister, to oversee all projects. The committee has selected the coastal sites intended to become resorts. Parliament is now set to approve the sites, three of which are south of Dures.

"These are relatively close to where a new or upgraded airport might be developed, and near sites of interest such as archaeology areas. They are also unpolluted and there are hunting grounds near by," Signor Vizzoli said.

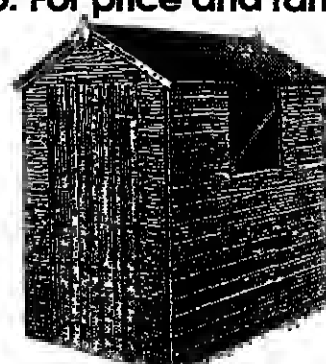
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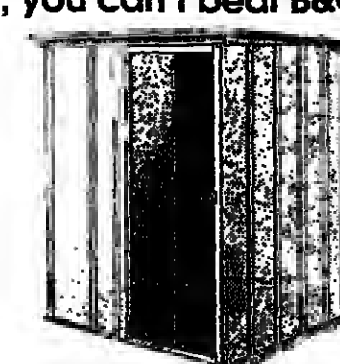
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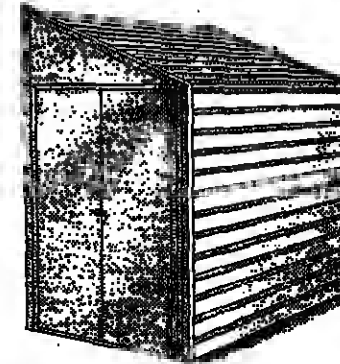
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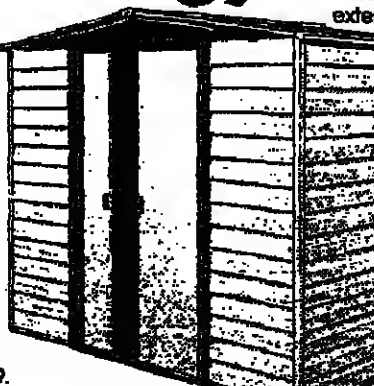
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£299.99
Also available in 10' x 8' (approx.)...£399.99.

Yeltsin trapped on Gorbachev treadmill of dispute and despair

FROM ANNE McELVOY IN MOSCOW

THE power struggle in 1990 and 1991 between Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, then a renegade Moscow functionary, polarised the staid world of Soviet politics. Their battle was characterised by chaos of aim, method and character, and by mutual loathing.

The persistence of the blunt outsider who tied his star to the cause of the Russian Federation paid off in the aftermath of the failed coup against President Gorbachev. But President Yeltsin's predicament today has a strange closeness to that of his predecessor. He too is fighting a disputatious Russian parliament intent on wresting power from the presidency for itself and ignoring the government's will in an ever more blatant manner. Once it was Mr Yeltsin who was the ambitious, aggrieved chairman of the Russian parliament and Mr Gorbachev who was fending him off from within the Kremlin walls.

Mr Yeltsin used to attack Mr Gorbachev for failing to deliver rapid and efficient reform; now he faces the same accusation from his opponents and many in his own camp. Like the former Soviet president, he has found it impossible to impose his ideas on the instinctively conservative.

Odder still, Mr Yeltsin seems to be copying his predecessor's doomed tactic of seeking to counterbalance failures at home with successes on the international stage, turning the signing of the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with America in January into an embarrassing spectacle of self-praise. The enthusiasm with which he hugged Helmut Kohl during the German's brief stopover in Moscow on Tuesday looked like the desperate gesture of a man seeking reassurance that he is still rated — at least by foreign statesmen.

Both Mr Yeltsin and Mr Gorbachev came to power intending to overthrow rigid economic structures but found them less movable than they imagined. Both relied on academic economists for guidance.

Russia's leader, like Mikhail Gorbachev before him, is striving to save domestic reforms while seeking success abroad

In late 1990 Mr Gorbachev's rejected Grigori Yavlinsky's radical "500-Day plan" to jolt the economy out of its doldrums and, two years later, at December's Congress of People's Deputies, Mr Yeltsin sacrificed his main exponent of shock therapy, Yegor Gaidar, the acting prime minister, to appease hardliners.

Now Mr Yeltsin wants to settle his battle with parliament by a referendum. Mr Gorbachev had the same idea in March 1991 when he called a plebiscite on whether the Soviet Union should stay together. He won, but nine months later the Union was dead — a thought that must haunt Mr Yeltsin as he gazes out at the dissatisfied Russian regions pressing their claims for more autonomy.

The Russian parliament failed yesterday to produce a majority in favour of convening an extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies next week to help resolve the power struggle between Mr Yeltsin and the parliament after 80 per cent of deputies abstained. The debate on convening a special session is due to continue today.

The phrase "post-Yeltsin era" now echoes around Moscow. At the last congress, Mr Yeltsin's status shifted within a few days from that of a strong leader fighting off the opposition's blows with rare panache to a man on the run, dolling out compromises and dismissing senior officials to buy time.

He dallied for too long, trying to please everyone and ended up pleasing nobody before issuing a "parliament or me" ultimatum that now looks like backfiring.

He does have advantages that Mr Gorbachev lacked, such as a popular mandate and the respect of most Russians. Despite the reverses of the past few weeks Mr Yeltsin still achieves 80 per cent in popularity polls — far more than any rival. He is, however, in danger of alienating himself from his supporters, preferring to engage in back-room pacts with his main enemy, Russian Khasbulatov, the parliamentary speaker, and patching together constitutional deals rather than putting his cause before the people in early elections.

Mr Yeltsin's legendary rhetorical touch appears to be deserting him as he roars neo-Bolshevik platitudes about "final options" and "extreme measures". Even *Izvestia*, the normally faithful newspaper, complained that he had withdrawn into a world of speeches and deals in which the fate of the Russian people is ignored.

Mr Gorbachev is, from his lair in the institute that bears his name, monitoring the sag in his old enemy's confidence and credibility with evident pleasure and issuing "I told you so" communiques. As unlikely as the idea sounds to most Russians, Mr Gorbachev has never entirely abandoned the idea of a comeback. As Mr Yeltsin scrambles to keep his grip on power, one of his bleakest recognitions must be that this has all happened to someone else not so long ago.

Yerevan: Armenian forces are about to take the city of Mardakert, the last stronghold of Azerbaijan forces in northern Nagorno-Karabakh, the disputed enclave in Azerbaijan, military sources in Yerevan, the Armenian capital, said yesterday. (AFP)



Yeltsin still no rival to match his popularity

Princess brings lepers comfort

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN KATHMANDU

THE Princess of Wales met a leprosy patient yesterday who is afraid that being cured will ruin his begging career. Karna Bahadur, 15, a street urchin for seven years, has reached a deal with doctors to let them cure him if they wrap his feet in bandages afterwards to make him look crippled.

The princess met him at the British-funded Anandaban leprosy hospital near Kathmandu, but he refused to talk to her because he is still upset about being cured. He has lost movement in his feet and legs and told doctors he did not want to walk again. A priest persuaded him to seek treatment.

Patients looked agog as the princess sat on their beds and touched the stumps of hands and feet lost to leprosy. She talked to all 16 patients and heard their life stories. As they talked, she stroked their arms and legs affectionately. She met Karna Bahadur in the occupational therapy area, where he is gradually learning to use his legs again.

The princess, who returns to London tomorrow after a five-day official tour of Nepal, also visited a newly opened memorial to those who died in the Pakistan International Airways flight that crashed into a hillside outside Kathmandu last September, killing 167 people, including 37 Britons.

Asked by Linda Kentro, who designed the memorial, if she was enjoying her trip to Nepal, the princess replied: "I am having a wonderful time." Earlier, the princess met Gurkha recruits who came down from the mountains for the first time in their lives only two days earlier. They had spent a day and a morning learning how to stand to attention for the princess.



Royal greeting: the Princess of Wales acknowledging a traditional welcome yesterday in Kathmandu from children at the British-funded Budhanilkantha school

Minister says Craxi managed bribe fund

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

THE battle by Bettino Craxi, the former Italian Socialist leader, to avoid his parliamentary immunity being lifted, which would leave the way open for corruption proceedings, took a bitter turn yesterday after his former right-hand man, Claudio Martelli, testified against him.

Magistrates in Milan on Wednesday night sent new evidence offered voluntarily by Signor Martelli, who himself resigned last month as justice minister after being implicated in the bribery scandal involving Italy, to a committee in the chamber of deputies examining Signor Craxi's fate.

Asked about a so-called "protection account" allegedly set up in Switzerland by the Socialists to receive millions of dollars in bribes from businessmen and state companies, Signor Martelli was quoted as saying: "Craxi would never have allowed me or others to deal with the question, he would have looked after it himself directly."

The managing director of Italmipre, the Italian construction giant, became the latest casualty in the bribery scandal yesterday. Eugenio Rendo, 44, was charged by Milan magistrates in connection with a bribe of 200 million lire (\$95,000) allegedly paid to a director of Enel, the state electricity board. Signor Rendo was appointed managing director ten years ago by his father Mario, a native of Sicily, who still controls the company.

Italmipre helped build EuroDisney near Paris and is believed to be the only Italian company involved in work on the Channel tunnel.

Germans approve tax rises to counter unification costs

FROM MICHAEL BINYON IN BONN

THE German cabinet yesterday approved a drastic economic consolidation package to rescue the country from the grip of recession while freeing funds to salvage the ailing economy in the east.

The package, the government's share of a proposed national belt-tightening known as the "solidarity pact", includes tax rises, cuts in subsidies and social services, spending deferrals and an array of economy measures that reduce west German living standards more than at any time since the Federal Republic was founded.

The savings, which were forced on the government by recession and the soaring cost of unification, are intended to raise DM150 billion (\$62.9 billion) a year for the east — about 5 per cent of the gross national product.

Presenting the package, Theo Waigel, the finance minister, and Günter Rexrodt, the economics minister, said it was the best that was possible in a worsening economic situation. It was essential to create a framework of stability that would take Germany into the next century, foster confidence, encourage investment and put forward a credible policy to combat the recession.

The Bundesbank, which yesterday failed to respond to international pressure to cut key interest rates, has made it clear that it would be willing to loosen its tight monetary policy only when the government had put forward a credible package to combat recession and balance spending and income more effectively.

The two ministers made it clear that details of the plan, which they hoped could become law before the summer parliamentary recess, would probably be considerably revised as they have to be approved by the Bundesrat, the upper house controlled by the Social Democrats. They said, however, that there was

no way around the need for deep cuts in government spending and sacrifices from the whole of German society. The average standard of living in Germany has slipped from second place in the European Community to seventh because of the costs of unification.

Herr Waigel, who has just rejected proposals by the prime ministers of the 16 states for the federal government to pay a larger share of the unification costs, delivered a bleak message of savings and sacrifice, which had to be borne by all sections of society. "We need more patience in the east and more solidarity in the west," he said.

Among the revenue-raising measures recently announced are an additional 13 pence on each litre of petrol, a cut in allowable tax deductions and a range of surcharges, including a general income tax increase beginning in 1995.

Poland's alchemist of power thrives on flexible formula

The East's Iron Lady has developed the contortionist-type politics a Polish leader needs. Roger Boyes meets the prime minister, Hanna Suchocka, in London

Leading Poland requires a rubber-limbed talent of a contortionist. Faced with unhappy Russians, Ukrainians and Lithuanians on the one side, the uncertain bulk of Germany on the other, fighting among the southern Slavs and apparent indifference to the Polish cause in Brussels, the politician's head swivels constantly between East and West.

Hanna Suchocka's head, under the circumstances, looks reassuringly normal, even if the hair has grown somewhat grayer than it was seven months ago. Since July she has been Poland's prime minister and, borrowing a few lessons from Margaret Thatcher, she has steered the government through some nasty squalls.

The broad principles of her government have stayed intact: a commitment to speedy and lasting market reform; tight money policies that have had the unions (remember Solidarity?) squealing, and a concerted drive to enter the European Community as soon as possible. It is this last mission that has brought the prime minister, sometimes dubbed the Iron Lady of Eastern Europe, to London.

The contortionist's skills have become particularly evident during her three-day trip. She has had to reassure the British government that the Polish economy has turned the corner and that it is a veritable island of stability. How else will the British be persuaded to raise Poland's credit status and invest more in the country? On the other hand, Mrs Suchocka, making a case for swift entry to the Community, has to emphasise that everything could collapse overnight if Russia lurches away from reform, or if refugees spill over the border.

There have been rumours in Warsaw and other Central European capitals for months that a new coup might be in the making in Moscow, that something was going adrift in the East. Mrs Suchocka, however, is adamant that Poland's future is not being linked to the personal fortunes of President Yeltsin. "We're not hinging our reform on an individual — that would be meddling." But if Moscow strayed from the democratic path, then "an authoritarian wave would sweep through Europe", she says.

The Polish leader is worried that the West will be taken by surprise by developments in the East, that it may be heading for a period of "post-Cold war isolationism".



Suchocka: seeking swift entry to EC

Her role is thus partly to sound a few alarm bells. At the very least, she argues, the West should be co-operating with Central Europe on how to cope with the present Balkan and future Russian refugees. "We cannot solve these problems on our own, we cannot simply build a new wall along our eastern frontier."

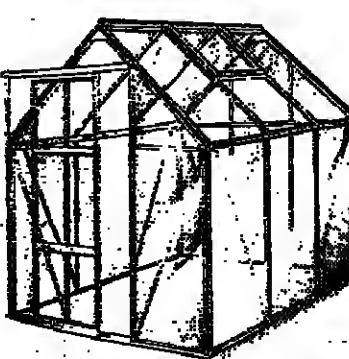
Unlike Baroness Thatcher — whom she met privately yesterday — Mrs Suchocka is a committee politician, seeking and listening to advice, quickly discovering the consensus position and then pushing forward with it.

While her style differs from that of Lady Thatcher, she shares an understanding of power. "It may literally be a question of chemistry," says an adviser who knows both women. "Mrs Suchocka, a lawyer, is the daughter of a chemist while Mrs Thatcher studied chemistry and law. Somewhere in that combination is the key to the alchemy of power."

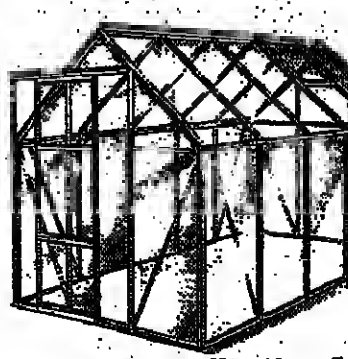
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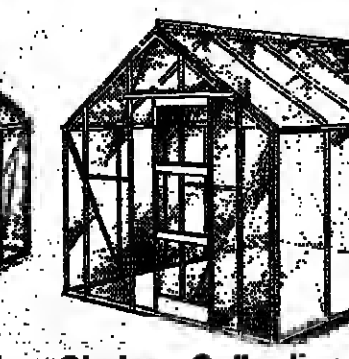
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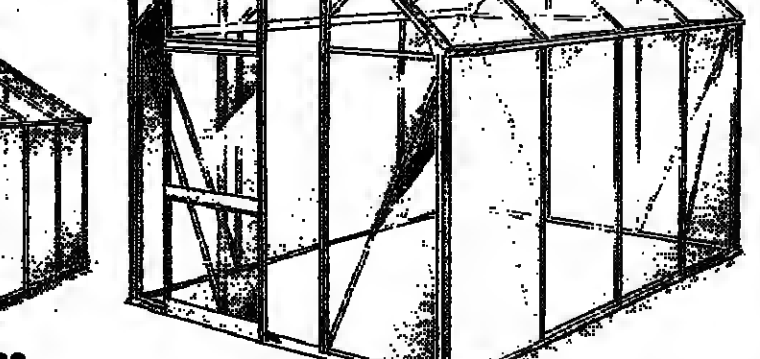
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Shaky grip on the sceptre

The Belgian king lost much of his power this week. How far do other European monarchs hold sway?

CONSTITUTIONAL monarchy has proved a surprisingly enduring institution in Europe. Hereditary heads of state are tolerated, even valued, in the present-day world largely because their real powers have been almost entirely stripped away. Of the seven major crowned heads, King Baudouin of Belgium has finally been emasculated by a vote of his country's lower house of parliament.

Baudouin, currently the longest-serving of Europe's monarchs, has lost his automatic right to approve the country's prime minister, and his right to dissolve parliament if there is a vote of no confidence in the government. In a country riven by Walloons and Flemings, the diminution of the monarch's few remaining powers is the clearest sign yet that his country is well down the slippery slope of federalism.



King Baudouin

His country is well down the slippery slope of federalism

It is in the nature of constitutional monarchy that its precise powers are vague, and nowhere are they vaguer than in Britain, which has no written constitution. No British monarch since Charles II has tried to force a dissolution of Parliament and the power is generally regarded as dead.

More real in Britain, although not seriously tested since 1924 (when the Tories lost a vote of confidence with George V as king), is the Queen's right to refuse a dissolution. British monarchs also retain the theoretical power to pick a prime minister — an issue raised during the Wilson-Heath fine balancing act of 1974: the Queen merely invites whoever looks most likely to command a majority of the house. Her counterparts on the Continent face a potentially much more difficult task.

Sweden changed its consti-

tution in 1975 to ensure that the king no longer had any part whatsoever in the parliamentary process, and any duty over who should form a government is handled by the parliamentary presidency, which is translated to Westminster would be composed of the Speaker, the deputy Speaker, and the Commons chairman of ways and means.

Norway has the oldest written constitution in the world after the United States, and does not like to dicker with it. King Harald is theoretically able to be drawn into a decision of choosing a government, and the debate surfaced at least twice in the 1980s under his father Olav, when the Oslo parliament had no clear majority. Again, to save the royal blushes, a presidency stepped in. Similar conditions apply in Denmark, but in the postwar years the system has never been put to the test in either country.

The Dutch, practical as ever, allow Queen Beatrix to hold a great deal of titular power, but none whatsoever in reality. They have a useful concept of "ministerial responsibility" under which her every act is done in the name of the government and if it is wrong, it is the government's fault.

SPAIN is Europe's one restored monarchy of recent times, and the most conspicuously successful. King Juan Carlos cannot dissolve parliament, but in a hung parliament he would be influential in the choice of prime minister.

Juan Carlos's most memorable triumph, however, was to rally his country's forces of democracy against the attempted military coup in Madrid in 1981. In that, he was acting, not as constitutional monarch, but as commander-in-chief of the Spanish armed forces. It was a tangible demonstration that the monarchic system still has much to commend it, whatever the fine print of its restricted powers.

ALAN HAMILTON



Medal holders: Sheila Duncan was overcome with emotion when she received her BEM last year, but Warrant Officer Andrew Mudd (right) says the system was unfair

Salute the blue-collar gong

The sun is going down on the "working-class" British Empire Medal.

Will it be missed? Alice Thomson and Nicholas Watt report

When a charwoman stumbled across a pile of lost top-secret documents during the second world war she dutifully handed them in to the War Office. Winston Churchill was so grateful that he personally awarded her a British Empire Medal in his resignation honours list. She may have helped save the nation but she could never have received a higher award. After all she was only a charwoman.

Nearly 50 years later the BEM, set up by George V, still goes to outstanding working-class people who "by virtue of their rank" cannot qualify for any other award. Their years of "meritorious service" do not merit a trip to Buckingham Palace. Instead they have a more modest local ceremony with the county Lord Lieutenant and senior military officers, where they receive their "gong for the workers".

Now John Major has decided that lollipop ladies, hospital porters, gardeners, lifeboatmen and typists are to be accorded the same status as bank managers, doctors and sportsmen. Yesterday he announced in the House of Commons that the "blue-collar" award would be abolished. The nation's so-called humbler citizens are to be eligible for the MBE (Member of the British Empire) hitherto reserved for the genteel inhabitants of middle-class suburbia.

Already the discreet committee charged with preparing recommendations for the Queen's birthday honours in June has been told to draw up as usual a list of nominees for the BEM — but on the basis that the recipients will then be pumped up

to an MBE. And from next year anybody can recommend someone they think deserves an honour.

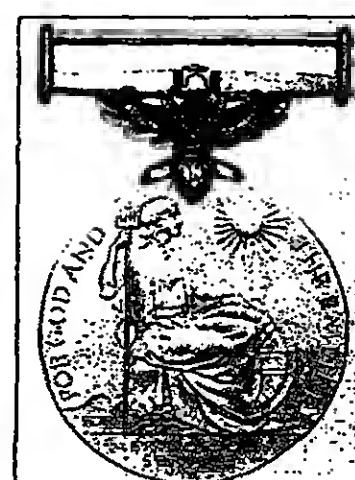
Dennis Harnett, a porter at Gosforth Park Hotel, Newcastle on Tyne, is one of the 900 people who received the medal two years ago. "I've been here 27 years looking nice and smart and waiting for the cars to come in. We've had most of the royal family and the trick is to make everyone feel welcome, but this award came out of the blue. After all I used to be a coal miner and who thought of them getting an award?"

Mr Harnett, 62, is not worried that the doctor down the road got an MBE for his 30 years service. "That's just gripping. This medal has been the climax of my life. I always wear it when VIPs come, it's a nice honour for the hotel," he says. "The Queen invited us to a garden party. I bought a lounge suit, the wife bought a dress and hat and they treated us like royalty. It was a day to remember. I hope Mr Major won't forget us all."

Generals, admirals and air marshals have voiced indignation at the proposed abolition of the BEM. They see it as the vision of a classless society into the twice-yearly distribution of awards. Already miffed that they are losing their automatic right to a knighthood, they say that rigid observance of social status is a vital component of a well-oiled military machine. But Andrew Mudd, the military police staff sergeant who was awarded a BEM in 1989, after he



Medal holders: Sheila Duncan was overcome with emotion when she received her BEM last year, but Warrant Officer Andrew Mudd (right) says the system was unfair



Out the British Empire Medal

lost both legs in an IRA car bomb attack, disagrees. "It's about time they sorted it out. Had I held my present rank of warrant officer I would have been awarded the MBE for doing the same thing," he says.

Warrant Officer Mudd, who now works in the military police's criminal records office, was awarded the medal for his work in guarding diplomatic staff in Beirut during the civil war. "It was the team leader in Beirut. It was unfair that an award was made simply according to the rank I had at the time," he says.

When Kenneth Chapman, 62, the keeper at Bull Point lighthouse,

North Devon, received a letter telling him he'd been awarded a BEM this year he was baffled. "I've been working lighthouses for 42 years but I never thought anyone noticed me. It's a quiet job, nothing flash. But I am thrilled to get the award and I'm satisfied with anything I get. My wife has told everyone," he says.

As the longest-serving lighthouse keeper should he not have been honoured automatically? "Nothing should just be given, otherwise there's no excitement to it. Some of those MPs seem to get given awards as losers' prizes and I'd hate that."

In the last 18 years Brenda Giles has saved over 320 sick seals and returned them to the sea, earning her the nickname of "seal mother" and a BEM. "Sometimes I work up to 20 hours a day feeding the young seals. They need six feeds a day and each one takes four hours, so it's exhausting work," she says.

She is pleased that work with wildlife is now being honoured but is not a great supporter of the honours system. "It looks as though I'm being ungrateful but most of those people get their honours just for going to drinks parties or looking glamorous while those of us who work our guts out get nothing. John Major is right. You shouldn't be given letters after your name just because you had a better education. But at least I now know I am working class."

Other recipients of the BEM are pleased to see the back of the medal.

Trevor England, 54, who was awarded the BEM last year for his service as coxswain with the Padstow lifeboat service in Cornwall, dismisses it as the "cleaners' medal". "It was nice to get the award but lifeboatmen know that however many lives they save they will never get anything more than a BEM. The government seems to throw away awards at a higher level but I know people who have raised millions for charity and received nothing."

Mr England, who has served with the lifeboat service for 35 years, says that although he wished he had gone to the palace he enjoyed the local ceremony. "The Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall is such a nice chap. We were in the army together."

The head gardener at Clare College, Cambridge, who was awarded a BEM last year for more than 40 years service, is said to see the medal as "a recognised all my years of service." Brian Arbon says, "and I was very proud to get it."

Sheila Duncan, 70, who received a BEM last year for 30 years' service at the Lamb's House day centre for the elderly in Edinburgh, says she understands the reforms but thinks it is a shame the medal has to go. "It's a pity. I am attached to anything that has empire in the name. But it's better to put everyone on the same level."

Miss Duncan enjoyed the local ceremony when the Lord Provost of Edinburgh presented the medal at the day centre in the company of all her friends. "I tried to say something when he presented the medal," she says, "but I was overcome with emotion."

THE TIMES

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Fair play for the fair sex

Clinics that select the sex of babies threaten the balance of communities

I rang the new London Gender Clinic yesterday about appointments. "We're booking for — let's see — July," said the receptionist brightly. Which means that several hundred couples have thought it worthwhile — even for a maximum 75 per cent chance of success — to make their way to north London and pay out more than £650, and that the business — an offshoot of the worldwide franchise using the "sperm sorting" system of Dr Ronald Ericsson — is well on the way to profit and proliferation.

Unless the law intervenes. In Britain, the jury is still out on these clinics: the British Medical Association and the leading churches have pronounced them unethical, but there is as yet no legal impediment. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority has no control if there is no in-vitro operation: Tim Sackville, the junior health minister, has said that the need for controls was "under consideration". Meanwhile the queue at Hendon lengthens, the semen is filtered, and the Y-chromosome sperm, which produce male children, are identified, preserved and re-injected.

Of course, discarded Dr Ericsson and his British colleagues were at pains to stress that both boy and girl babies are on offer. The fear that families, especially from cul-

tures which prize sons, would use the service to unbalance the population was dismissed by Dr Ericsson as "the British having a problem with racism". This is an uncomfortable charge, although we know that in the Indian sub-continent, 7 per cent more boys than girls are now born because of female infanticide and the use of selective abortion, to accuse fellow-citizens in Britain of even wanting such a thing smacks awkwardly of racism.

But this week comes an outspoken attack from inside the Asian community. Two researchers state firmly that the patriarchal society of the sub-continent makes men want sons so badly that they will do almost anything to ensure them. And they affirm that the same thing is happening here, and that it will be aggravated if we tolerate gender clinics.

Dr Gautam Appa is a lecturer at the London School of Economics: his co-author Dr Vibhuti Patel is a leading campaigner for women's rights in India and a Reader in Women's Studies at Bombay. She has been studying Asian communities worldwide since 1976, and both researchers have travelled in rural India where, as Dr Appa puts it, "there are villages where you can't get clean water but you can get amniocentesis". Dr Ericsson knows this in



Calling for a ban: Dr Appa, left, and Dr Patel

1980 he held a workshop for gynaecologists in India, claiming in his publicity that his system averted the "need" for abortions. Clients of his clinics sign a paper saying they will not abort a wrong-sex baby, but this is, opponents say, laughably unenforceable.

The problem lies deep in the culture and even diluted by westernisation, remain powerful: when Dr Appa's campaign was quoted in the Asian press, the first to phone him was a man who missed the point and asked for help "because his brother-in-law has three girls and needs a boy".

The result is, the two researchers say baldly, that Asian women are routinely being put through mental torture. Physical, too, by late abortion (although abortion on grounds of gender is illegal under the 1977 Act, the LSE research and newspaper investigations find it remarkably easy to get).

The researchers' argument is that the gender clinic will aggravate the problem by making attempted selection respectable in the wider community. Some might argue that successful gender selection would be more humane than the present practice of

abortion, and Dr Appa sees their point. "You could argue that just as amniocentesis tests decreased the rate of infantile in India, so gender selection will lead to less abortion. So why not let it happen? In India, economists have even made models to prove that women would benefit if they were fewer, because their value would rise. The evidence is otherwise. There is already in some areas forced polyandry, where a girl is married to one brother and treated as the wife of all." Dr Patel adds the experience of South Korea: "Since the technology of gender selection came (pre-natal testing and abortion), there are 111 boys born per 100 girls. The result is a shortage of brides, the return of child marriage, and a rise in rape and abduction."

These abuses bring technology itself under fire. Gender clinics were widely opposed by Indian liberals, and in one state — Maharashtra — amniocentesis has been banned. Dr Appa thinks it would be no bad thing if in Britain, all tests to determine sex should be confined to NHS hospitals which have a clear code of practice of not telling patients the sex of the expected child. As for the gender clinic, he and Dr Patel want it banned.

Dr Appa is scornful of those white liberals who stand back from the argument for fear of racism. "Racism means unfounded prejudice. This is all true." Any smugness from the rest of us might be quelled by a world figure Dr Ericsson gave in 1986. At that time, the first 46 franchised clinics had helped 263 couples to have a boy. And 15 to have a girl.

One white Englishwoman gazed for a while at those two figures and said, "My God, they're trying to wipe us out." Not a comfortable text for Monday's International Women's Day. But not an untimely one, either.

LIBBY PURVES

Janet Daley



The weakest personalities are most attracted to messianic cults and should be protected from them

If your need is great enough, you will take your messiah where you find them. Perhaps if David Koresh had not existed someone would have had to invent him. There is a sense, of course, in which he is the invention of his followers. And it is that which makes him of more interest than his small, rather pitiable exploits would suggest. Such bizarre charismatic cults seem to speak of a spiritual vacuum in which those deranged by modern urban life seek solace — although such sects proliferated in ancient Rome as well. That many of the contemporary ones are rapacious and exploitative seems only to add to the poignancy of their appeal. When they are equipped with an arsenal, thanks to the absurd gun laws of the United States, the questions become more urgent.

What kind of life is it that propels people into self-destruction in the name of an incoherent doctrine mouthed by a nut? How could anyone believe that Mr Koresh, or any of the other rambling inadequates who have presented themselves to the credulous, was the re-incarnated Christ? But then, why should anyone have believed that the lovely son of a carpenter — untutored in theology and in rebellion against the temple authorities — was the anointed son of God? He too instructed his followers to give up all their worldly goods — but to hand them over to the poor, not to him. His imitators do offer more or less plausible accounts for selling the wealth of their converts: the money and property will be used to spread the word, to secure the future, to protect the flock from infidel persecution. The story only seems blatantly cynical from the outside. To those who believe absolutely, the sacrifices which are required need only another small leap of faith.

The distinguishing features of dangerous cults are reputed to be that they use mind control ("brainwashing") techniques, that they insist that their own doctrine is the only correct one, that their leaders are unquestionable authorities and that they take money from their disciples. A sinister catalogue indeed. Now ask yourself how many of those characteristics also apply to say, the Roman Catholic church. By which, I intend no slur upon Catholicism, but simply wish to show that while these conditions may be necessary for identifying a dodgy cult, they are not in themselves, sufficient.

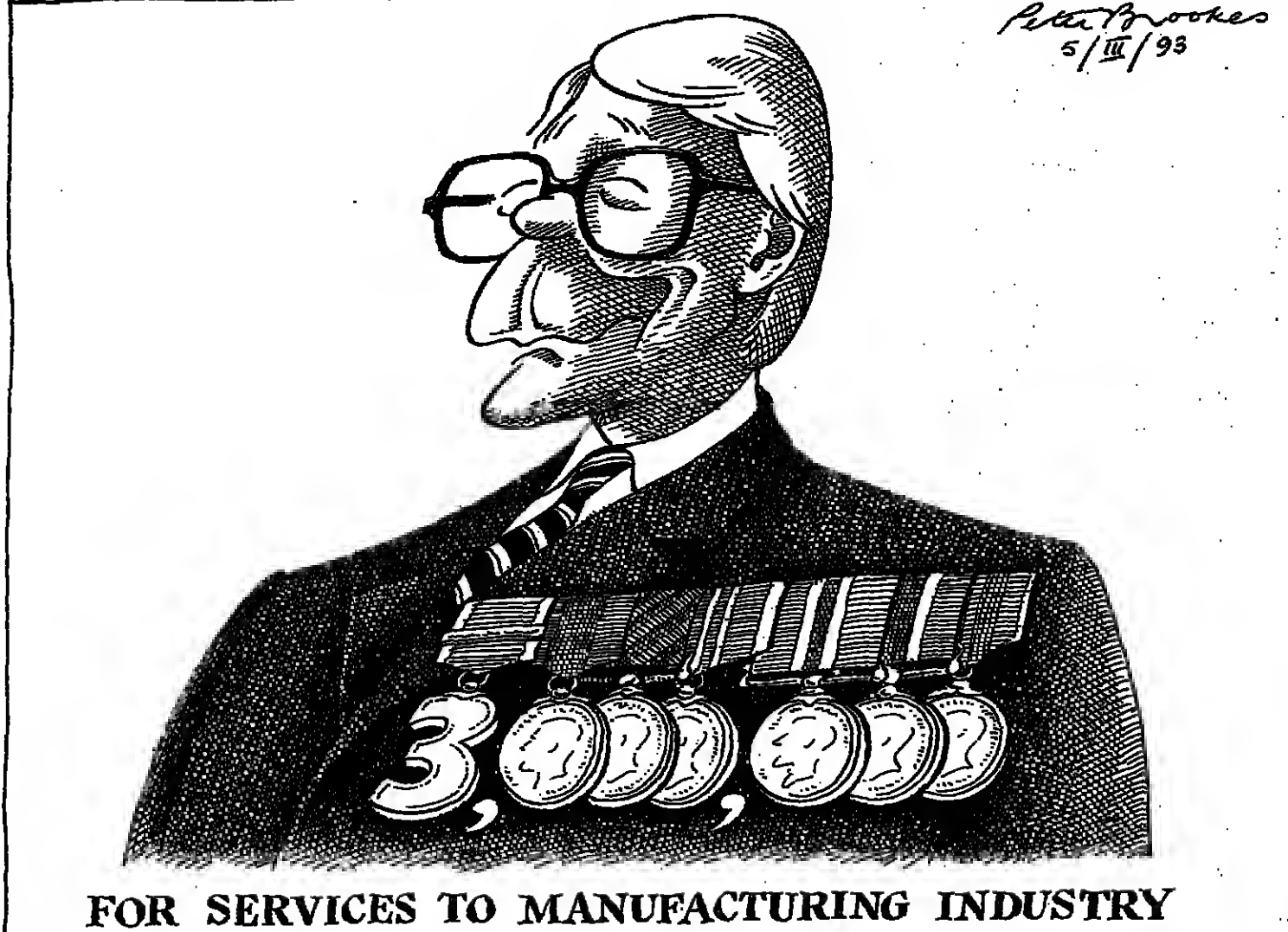
Families which have been torn apart by these movements, or whose loved ones are caught up in a suicidal frenzy, cannot wait for history's verdict on which beliefs are theologically worthwhile and which are lunatic. For

What can be done about the ruthless zealot?

present themselves as charities, there ought to be little difficulty in framing a statute which says that individuals who contribute to charity above a certain limit must also allow for a cooling-off period. To deal with sects which force their adherents into enforced seclusion, the law against imprisonment may need to be reinterpreted so that it can be applied to those who have apparently given their consent. Perhaps no one should be permitted to remain in such retreat without periodic visits by independent investigators who would have to be allowed to interview the individual alone.

Like most of its modern predecessors, this government observes religious freedom very strictly. Liberal democracies have been notoriously squeamish about seeming to interfere in people's rights to adopt any creed they like. Two years ago, a parliamentary panel urged a review of what it called "psychological offences" connected with coercive religious beliefs. Ironically, the more secular society becomes, the more it treats religion — or even its sinister impersonations — as untouchable sacrosanct.

But doctrine which speaks of another world still has consequences in this one. There cannot be different definitions of criminality for religious and non-religious endeavour: it is not people's beliefs which need to be brought under the law but their actions.



FOR SERVICES TO MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

The sting in the tale

What is it in human nature that earns such easy profits for con men?

It is time I returned to my hero, Tony Hetherington, with his amazing and hilarious exposures of countless rogues, crooks, shysters and scoundrels. You will find him every week in the business section of *The Sunday Times*; let me describe what he does — for the fingering of the light-fingered is by no means his only trade.

He could best be described as a financial Agony Aunt; he does not tackle the marital and sexual problems of the nation, but dries the tears of the defrauded, straightens out tax problems, corrects the haughtiness and incompetence of the banks, and explains why this deficit or that windfall cannot be used as the enquirer would like. But I call him a hero because he spends weeks chasing through dusty documents and spending hours on the phone, just to make sure that the complainants who bombard him get what is their due; again and again he prides out of companies and organisations not only what his flock are entitled to, but an extra slice for the worry and waiting. Nor does he hesitate to slam the door in the face of an appellant who has no case, let alone a dubiously legal one.

But I didn't come here this morning just to make him blush over his breakfast. My purpose is to wonder once more about the propensity to swallow any patter, however obviously dishonest, which the purveyor of it assures the suckers comes under the heading of "There is a tide in the affairs of men/Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune". (If they would only read on for a few more pages, they would find that Brutus — for it is he — dies by his own hand, and rather messily, at that.)

Listen to one of Mr Hetherington's recent (and juicy) scams: a reader was about to fork out £1,769 for an American gold coin of 1882 which, said the seller, would be bound — absolutely and without doubt bound — to rise in value by 28 per cent to 30 per cent within the next eight months, and by 6 per cent the very next day.

The outfit who were promising these nothings-for-money called themselves the Washington Mint; the reader whose £1,769 was trembling in the scales remembered that there had been just such an enterprise, only the goods were gemstones rather than rare coins. Our sucker asked the crucial question: "Washington Mint has offices in Brussels, Washington,

and Hong Kong. Is it respectable, and is the price fair?"

Now hear our St George. "The price is completely fair to Washington Mint. To you as an investor, it stinks." First, Tony checked with a genuine coin expert, whose verdict was that there were three versions of the coin: the best one was worth three-sevenths of the Washington Mint's asking price, the worst was worth one-ninth of the price.

A good start. Tony dug as far as America, where he found that there were no offices at the address given. He dug deeper: he discovered that Washington Mint had nothing to do with Washington or Mints, and indeed that the company had, a few years earlier, been legally forbidden to use either half of the name. Tony dug yet deeper, he turned up proof that the company had been making false claims about investments by suckers in silver. But Tony does not leave out the names. Hear his last words on the subject: "The man behind Washington Mint was Frederick L. Berg. The business now appears to be run from Brussels, and that is where you will find Mr Berg. Don't give him a nickel."

And yet the correspondent was about to throw £1,769 away when Tony threw the lifeline, and I have no doubt that many investors (recreational suckers) who know not Tony, did lose such sums, and for all I know ten times as much.

Nor can we sniff and say that people who fork out like that are just motivated by greed, with a few exceptions I don't believe it. (The terms in which the Sunday sucker addressed Tony, for instance, were anything but those of a man who was licking his lips over the fortune he was about to make.) Yet confidence tricksters are by far the most successful criminals in every civilised country; even the most skilled burglars cannot match their winnings.

Do you know the story of Gay Byrne, that splendid Irish broadcaster, chat-show host and general good fellow? Gay was no monetary expert, but when he began to make a

substantial income, a friend — who was a financial wizard — offered to take over all his monetary doings. Year after year, the friend paid him out of the funds that were accruing, year after year the friend invested wisely in good stocks, year after year the friend demonstrated that the worth of Gay's property had risen. Then the friend died, and Gay discovered that he was penniless: the "friend" had stolen everything Gay had. He was in debt for many thousands of pounds of commercial sums, and even more to the tax-man: Gay did not even own his house — the expert friend had sold it over his head. (He learned the news in the afternoon, and walked the streets all night, trying to find words in which to tell his wife.)

There was a happy ending, though it took years. Gay fought back slowly and painfully paid off what he owed, and made a new start and a new income. Today, he is a man of whom you would think that he has never had misfortune visit him. And indeed, as anyone who has the least knowledge of Gay knows, he really is a wise, shrewd, well-balanced man, a man who would never allow himself to fall into such mire, at least not without testing the depth of the mire. Would such a man, you ask, give his money and his life into anyone's grasp on note of hand alone, at least not without making a few enquiries from time to time? Well, he did. (cf Maxwell, of course.)

There is a theory which argues that the easily deceived are the pure of heart: because they would never cheat or lie or steal — indeed, not do anything even slightly dubious — their very make-up ensures that they cannot suspect anyone else of doing what they would never do. It is a touching faith, but it cannot be true: again and again we hear of the hard-boiled, the ruthless, the ironclad, being caught in the same net that was used to fiddle an aged and absent-minded widow out of her savings.

There is another side to this argument, but I offer it cautiously, in case some of the swindled are reading these words: they are words from which they are unlikely to take comfort. I have written on the subject in a different context, but I think it is valid here too.

Many people are run over by drunken drivers; many others have their homes burnt down by a careless match; some are in aeroplanes which crash; there are even a few cases of rabies from infected dogs; yes, there are countless horrors and pains and disappointments and injuries and robberies and murders — truly countless afflictions, man-made or (a beastly slur on the Almighty) "act of God". But, by and large, we do not go about the streets or in our homes as though one or more of these bolts from nowhere is about to fall upon us. On the contrary, we behave, even the most pessimistic of us, as though we are utterly immune, even immortal.

This is why I said I might offend some of my readers: a family who have lost everything to thieves, or who have seen the breadwinner killed by a drug-steeped driver, are not likely to think of immunity, let alone immortality. But a moment's calm thought shows that it is true. For every murdered human being there are very many millions who stay alive; for every burgled there are gigantic crowds of the unbattered, for every misfortune there are thousands who have never been struck by lightning, literal or metaphorical. The truth is that wickedness, though there is a very great deal of it in countless varieties, is only an almost invisible proportion among the good, the true, the untouchable. This, presumably, is what stops Tony Hetherington from being a cynic, or going mad; there is certainly enough wickedness in the world to keep him and a dozen like him (though there is none like him) in business, but he knows that for every one of the swindled who seek his help there are 10,000 who will never need his counsel.

Still, the rogues in his column make most of the entertaining bits; I wish he would write a book — not just of his encounters with rogues, but a serious study of human gullibility and what it signifies. I'll give him a cynic of my own for a start. I was in Berlin a few months ago, where the Yugoslav refugees were trying to make a living. And at what? Why, the three-card trick; and as I watched, a queue formed, an entire queue had lined up to be fleeced. And nobody said "Baaaaaa"

the Past, she trilled: "Think about the morning after — I would be lying back in Stratford. He would be there with that quill pen, that great domed head, his ruff slightly askew after the passion we had shared. And he would be writing 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?' to me. I would be his muse."

● Liverpool city council's involvement in a forest creation scheme on Merseyside has ground to a temporary halt. The sponsor is Nuclear Electric and the council has spent thousands of pounds on signs declaring itself a nuclear-free zone.

● Euro-Currie

TORY MPs at last have the chance to wreak their revenge on Jacques Delors. Edwina Currie is now within walking distance of Brussels. Currie has made it to the shortest of three for the Bedfordshire South Euro-constituency, which the party is expected to hold in the Euro-elections this summer. Currie's opponents are Graham Mather, a former director of the Institute of Economic Affairs, who now runs the European Policy Forum, and Andrew Pearce, who lost his Euro-seat at the last election. Currie, the favourite, has been deluged with offers of help from her Westminster colleagues.

A rotten system of honours

Radical reform

is overdue,

says John Grigg

The prime minister's long-awaited reform of the honours system is good as far as it goes, but does not amount to much. A few blemishes are to be removed, but the biggest blemishes will remain.

There is a good case for having some sort of honours system, and most countries in practice have one. The idea that honours are to be found only in monarchial states is palpably false. Republican France has an elaborate system of awards. In the United States, medals, and even some titles, are conferred.

The justification for honours is that they can provide a criterion of public achievement and merit that is quite distinct from, and not dictated by, power or wealth. Much of the really valuable work in a country is done by people who do not hold important offices and who are either underpaid, or not paid at all, for their services. It is right that such people should be honoured, and in no invidiously mean or inferior way.

Unfortunately our honours system has given too much recognition to those who are already prominent and/or rich, too little to those who are neither, but whose work is of immense cumulative worth.

The central flaw in the system is that it is under direct political control. From the public interest point of view, this is disastrously wrong for two main reasons. First, it adds another dimension to the already excessive patronage of the government, and of the prime minister in particular. Nobody holding Mr Major's job, with the difficulties and pressures that it entails, could fail to abuse the honours system to some degree, for the purpose of rewarding supporters and penalising trouble-makers. The temptation is too great to be resisted by any human being.

Even if the possibility of financial corruption, for the purpose of party fund-raising, could be absolutely discounted — and it is hard to see how it can fail to exist, in however camouflaged and indirect a form — the element of power corruption is ever present and easily discernible in any honours list. Lady Thatcher's bestowal of knighthoods on friendly editors is on the notorious case in point. Another is the regular appearance of a posse of backbench Conservative MPs among the new knights in every list. This practice will continue, and the motivation is unlikely to change.

The other main reason for regarding the present system as gravely defective is that those who operate it are, for the most part, too busy to give it anything like the systematic and concentrated attention it deserves. From the prime minister, through departmental ministers, down to the civil servants who sift recommendations, the pressure of other work is too intense to enable our complex system of honours to be rationalised and properly administered. As a result it is, at best, a very hit-or-miss affair; at worst, a perennial scandal.

The overwhelming requirement is that it should be removed from politics and from the existing Whitehall machine, and entrusted instead to an independent mediating body on the analogy of the Arts Council or the Higher Education Funding Council. Such a body would be responsible for assessing the merits of all candidates for honours, including those put in by ministers or government departments, and then recommending names for inclusion in the two honours lists. Ordinary members of the public should be actively encouraged to send in names for consideration, as the prime minister has rightly proposed.

In addition, the Honours Council or Commission (whatever it might be called) would have the task of reviewing the basis on which honours are awarded and, where necessary, of changing the balance as between different categories of public service. At present, only the armed forces and the diplomatic service are shown separately in the lists. All the other categories are lumped together in a mass of grey print from which no significant comparisons can be drawn.

Under a reformed system there would be separate lists for a wide variety of other categories: health, education, literature and the arts, science, technology, business initiative, civil service, police, sport, politics (national and local) and, not least, voluntary service. With such a breakdown, it would be possible for everyone to be reasonably satisfied that the distribution of honours was wise and fair.

The new body would, of course, have to be composed of people of the highest probity, intelligence and reputation, in whom the public could have entire confidence. It should have the staff and resources needed for the task, and it should work full-time.

At the apex of the honours system (beneath the sovereign) stands the House of Lords, and no reform that fails to tackle the House of Lords question can be taken seriously. This matter could not come within the scope of the new independent body. It would have to be dealt with by Parliament itself. But unless and until it is dealt with our honours system will be rotten at the top.

Thatcher's targets

JOHN Major would do well to desist from attacks, veiled or otherwise, on his predecessor. She is, after all, being very kind to him in her memoirs — so far.

Relations between the two camps are strained, particularly after his newspaper reference to being in a "minority" over manufacturing policy in the 1980s. Baroness Thatcher may be tempted to retaliate.

If she does, though, it is unlikely to be in her memoirs. Lady Thatcher, whose low profile in the Maastricht debate owes more to her determination to complete her book than to reticence, has reserved most of her venom for her former colleagues Lord Howe and Lord Lawson.

The book comes out on the eve of the party conference, so Major will be relieved to learn that he has thus far escaped lightly. Far from accusing her successor of a sell-out, Lady Thatcher expresses her relief that it was Major, and not Heseltine, who won the contest.

One of her supporters says: "She spells out what she thought at the time: a Heseltine victory would have undone all her work. John Major kept Heseltine out."

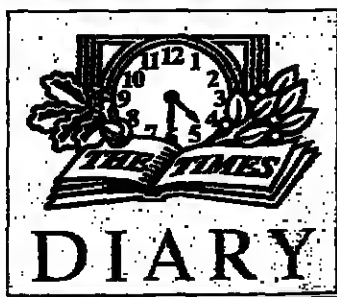
The former prime minister is working all hours on the tome with Robin Harris, her chief of staff. They are not helped by the fact that the only time she kept a diary was during the Falklands war.

The book was going to conclude with her departure from Downing Street but now she has decided to write an epilogue outlining what she would have done, had she gone on. Major, however, should not breathe too easily. She has not finished writing.

● Sir Norman Fowler's reforms of the Tory party seem to have failed their first test. Dozens of party members failed to receive their admission passes, or their agendas, in time for today's Conservative Central Council meeting at Harrogate. Chaos is predicted. Someone will have some explaining to do and it may well be Peter Dodson, secretary of the party's National Union, appointed last month by Fowler to head the new conference unit.

Second sight

NEXT time Gus O'Donnell, the prime minister's press secretary,



holds a briefing on economic recovery he may receive a sepioid response. With Treasury forecasts notoriously unreliable, O'Donnell may be relying on alternative methodology: gazing at a crystal ball.

One such ball was presented to O'Donnell by Charles Reiss, political editor of the *Evening Standard*, who no doubt thought it would be a more reliable economic indicator. It has pride of place in O'Donnell's Downing Street office. What would Sir Bernard Ingham have thought?

● They gave you leaves on the line. They gave you the wrong type of snow. And now, direct from British Rail, the latest whacky, wonderful excuse for late trains: unclipped points. The 2pm Swansea train took two hours to travel 15 miles

from Paddington to Ealing Broadway on Wednesday. Two bus journeys and diversions via Slough and Reading were involved and the passengers arrived in Wales five hours late. Along the way a Tannoy appeal was made for any BR staff who could "clip the points". A BR spokesman explains: "We have to operate the points manually when the power fails. It's a last resort."

Pause for effect

WHEN the Rev Michael Manley announced from the pulpit what he was giving up for Lent his congregation were delighted. Manley, vicar of St Luke and St Oswald, Preston, has stopped giving sermons. But his flock will not be deprived of spiritual sustenance. "They have to take the pressure instead and stage two-minute dramatic productions to illustrate the readings," he says. "At least they are funnier than my sermons."

If at first...

THE omens do not look so good for L'Escargot, the Soho restaurant, which opens under new management next month. Both head chefs in the restaurant, whose financial backers include Jonathan Ross, come from eateries which

have closed. David Cavalier was owner and head chef at Cavaliers, Battersea, which shut two years ago. He has worked at The Bell, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire, ever since. Garry Hollhead was head chef at Sutherlands in Soho, which called in the receivers last year. He says all will be well at L'Escargot. After all he did leave "five minutes before Sutherlands went down".

Oh, oh, Antonia

HAROLD Pinter has a rival. Lady Antonia Fraser, his wife, declared on Radio 4 yesterday that if she could choose a lover from history it would be William Shakespeare. Speaking on *Looking Forward* to

Shall I compare thee to a Pinter play?



GED



PASSING THE BUCK

Mr Major cannot escape all blame for past mistakes

Every time the prime minister tries to climb out of a political hole, he seems to lose his footing and slip yet further down. Yesterday he skidded and slithered at question time as John Smith taunted him over remarks he had made in an interview with *The Independent*. Mr Major, it seems, had intended to reassert his authority and trumpet his "revolution". Instead his words were seen as an unwarranted attack on the government of his predecessor, a most ungentlemanly act from which prime ministers traditionally refrain.

The prime minister can be seen to some extent as unfortunate. If he was truly criticising an aspect of Thatcherite policy — the assertion that manufacturing industry was becoming less important to the economy than services — his indiscretion appears more maladroit than vindictive. Asked about the assertion, he replied: "I don't agree with it. I didn't agree with it in the Eighties. I am not a minority view now — and, anyway, I am in a better position to expound my views." It is uncharitable to read into these words a vituperative assault on Margaret Thatcher's whole philosophy.

Somewhat more disingenuous was the way in which he sought to blame the previous administration for the economic mess in which he has found himself. "I think you have to consider the inheritance I had when I became prime minister: we had 15 per cent interest rates, inflation just under 11 per cent, there was no certainty that interest rates wouldn't go up and no certainty inflation wouldn't go up." Did he suppose that his readers might be unaware which future prime minister was Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time? Perhaps he was intending to lay the blame further back, on the Lawson chancellorship. Then, after all, he was only Chief Secretary to the Treasury, a job he held for all but three months of the ill-advised boom.

In peaceful political times, none of this would be worth more than idle amusement. It is only today, with opponents of Maas-tricht ever alert to counter-attack, that it

carries any weight. Mr Major's Tory critics can be relied upon to strike back hard against the slightest of slights. This latest row shows once again how corrosive the ratification process has become.

Although the substance of the argument may be small, it does, however, serve another purpose. It reinforces the memory of just how silent was the prime minister's rise to power. Many ministers in the Thatcher administration let it be known, privately or not so privately, that they were out of sympathy with her views or style. Most of them were excluded from the cabinet for many years as a result. Had one of those ministers subsequently won the leadership, he would have been quite justified in reiterating his position now.

Mr Major, by contrast, was one of those who kept his head down. He rarely strayed outside his brief. So reticent was he that, by the time he was appointed foreign secretary, he had still not made his views on Europe known. One of the main reasons why he won the leadership election was that his beliefs, even then, were so opaque that MPs on all sides of the party thought he agreed with them. In particular, the Thatcherites thought he was their man. So he should be particularly careful when dissociating himself from the policies of the past. Mr Major does not need to stress how different is his leadership from that of his predecessor: it is all too luminously apparent in his style, his words and his actions.

Prime ministers who take over the leadership of their party after it has already been in government for some years are always at some disadvantage. They cannot spend all their time criticising the previous Labour or Tory regime the way they would if pendulum politics were operating. A long period of one-party rule necessitates instead the occasional admission of error. Had Mr Major sounded more contrite in his interview, he might have won plaudits for honesty. Instead, he looked as if he was dishonourably shifting blame on to colleagues which he could more humbly have shouldered himself.

THE PERILS OF LENDING

Bankers are all too slow to learn lessons from the past

Bank lending disasters have been as common over the past 12 years as a bad day at the races. They have happened in too many big financial centres to be mere coincidence or bad luck. From the Third World debt debacle via the American oil slump and Japan's financial crash to the British recession, the story has been the same. Sober bankers have fallen over each other to lend to the latest boom sector. They have put the desire to outdo their rivals ahead of the simple lesson that bubbles always burst.

Britain's main clearing banks have each had their particular black years. Midland even lost its independence as the price of suffering one too many. But there is still something particularly shocking about the troubles of Barclays, which was long seen as the canniest of the big banks, a reputation taken to justify the traditional succession of the best scions of its network of Victorian founding families. Yesterday Barclays announced the first loss in its 300-year history after writing off £2.5 billion for bad debts, mostly in Britain.

Customers, whether private depositors or small business borrowers, can only look aghast at such profligate lending. They suspect, generally correctly, that they are paying the price through increased charges and fees. Banks now aim to outdo each other in raising income, cutting jobs, calling in risky loans, shedding unprofitable customers and closing branches.

Others are paying too. In Barclays' case,

the price to shareholders is particularly clear. In 1988, the bank's non-family chairman decided Barclays had to regain its top spot in the British banking league, raised £900 million from shareholders and embarked on a lending spree when the market was at its highest. As a result, Barclays has lost all that money on loans to property companies alone and dividends have been cut.

The City is furious. Sir John Quinlan, an engaging career bank manager best known for taking Barclays into football sponsorship, retired early. Investors' ire is now focused on his successor, Andrew Buxton. Sir John's main lending lieutenant, Mr Buxton would not have been elected to the combined jobs of chairman and chief executive, say the critics, had he not been a member of one of the most prominent of Barclays' founding families. City institutions, angry at their own misjudgment, have hit on privilege as a scapegoat.

If family inheritance has any lessons for today, it is that the separation of boardroom control from day-to-day management was healthy. Otherwise Barclays' traditions are largely irrelevant to its plight. It was Sir John who ditched most family board members and brought in the authors of the Lawson boom for their sage advice. Too many banks have lost their way, whether run by family members, entrepreneurs, distinguished outsiders or those who have worked up the corporate ladder. Sadly, for all the fashionable scurrying to tighten "risk management", they will probably only repeat their mistakes.

UP TO A POINT, PRIME MINISTER

Memorandum from the Permanent Secretary: March 5, 1993

With the greatest possible respect, prime minister, I am constrained to protest with the utmost vehemence about the proposed new arrangements for the honours system you announced to the House yesterday, without having the courtesy to warn me. As Richard Crossman (whose private secretary I once was) observed in the first volume of his deeply unprofessional but not entirely inimitable diaries, the reply of "Yes, Minister", in the jargon of Whitehall, implies politeness rather than assent. Courtesy was the only sense in which I approved your speeches about honours.

Of course, I quite understand the need, for electoral purposes, to emphasise in public your attachment to a classless society "at ease with itself". But you must not expect your senior civil servants to approve of ease as a policy objective, or applaud when you put your Leveller's moral posturing into practice. Behind the political rhetoric, they have to keep the wheels of the administration turning, and honours are an essential and economical oil for that purpose.

By reducing and diluting that useful oil, even by so little as you announced yesterday, you impair the efficiency of administration. Well-deserved knighthoods delivered automatically on retirement are part of the unwritten contract under which we joined your service. Old Boofy Armstrong of the FO would have joined the board of Empire Gold Mines five years ago if he had not been hanging on for his KCMG ("Kindly Call

Me God", as the young rascals dub it) to be upgraded to the final accolade of GCMG ("God Calls Me God"). Bernard Woolley is not at all amused that he may have to share the MBE he expects with your chauffeur.

Foreign governments will not understand. It is part of the necessary etiquette of diplomacy that our ambassadors to Paris and certain other major capitals should receive knighthoods on their appointment. The foreigners expect it, and would feel dishonoured by an ambassador with less.

At last, prime minister, I am in full accord with your decision to leave political honours severely untouched. Your backbenchers are turbulent enough without taking away the useful carrot of a knighthood and stick of its denial to keep them in order. If you started giving politicians knighthoods for merit rather than loyalty, that mischievous but talented trouble-maker Julian Critchley would be the only one of his intake with a knighthood, rather than the only one without one.

Thank Bagehot you have resisted the siren voices urging you to undertake a root-and-branch pruning of the system, a commission to consider the whole rickety structure, the removal of its control from the Downing Street engine-room, and all such radical claptrap. If you let the daylight in on our patronage system, you will destroy its magic. I have the honour to remain, prime minister, your humble and civil servant, Sir Humphrey Appleby, CB, CVO, GCB, KCB, etc.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 071-782 5000

History and experience brought to bear in fight against juvenile crime

From Professor Jonathan Shepherd

Sir, Serious violent crimes are nothing new, though some provoke media and public outrage more than others ("Violent years when teenagers first terrorised Britain", report, March 1). Fortunately, we have much more reliable information on crime rates now than in the days of "teddy boys", when all that was available were police crime statistics.

In England and Wales, doorstep interviews for the British Crime Survey (BCS) found only a 20 per cent increase in woundings and robbery between 1981 and 1991, whereas comparable offences recorded by the police increased by 90 per cent (partly because more violent crime is reported now than it used to be). BCS and casually department statistics show less marked increases and more frequent peaks and troughs — for example, that national rates of violence fell between 1981 and 1983.

In the Bristol Royal Infirmary casualty department, which serves the most deprived areas of the city, numbers of victims attending for treatment remained constant between 1977 and 1987, before a substantial increase to 1991. Although the infirmary's rates of attendance of victims of violence rose from 260 per 100,000 population in 1973 to 850 per 100,000 in 1990, this only represented an increase from 1 per cent to 3 per cent of overall case load.

Throughout this period a large majority of victims were young men, many of whom had been drinking heavily and had been treated after assaults on more than one occasion. In both Avon and South Glamorgan hospitals, a month frequently goes by without one crime victim over the age of 50 attending for treatment.

Individual incidents are tragic and can prick the national conscience. Violent crime, however, gives rise to much less loss of life, pain and suffering than accidents. An unemotional assessment of risk of assault in Britain today is, from a public health perspective, a highly reassuring and comforting exercise for residents of all but the poorest areas.

Nevertheless, there is no room for complacency, and historical perspectives of violence can be useful. Between 1856 and 1914 assaults and robbery recorded by the police in England and Wales fell by 55 per cent and 90 per cent respectively. Such decreases would be a triumph for crime prevention and the public health if they occurred today.

Explanations have included progressively less economic deprivation, a lessening of social enforcement and, significantly, the moralising influence of the reformers. Without Shaftesbury, for example, whose long-sustained mission in education, men-

tal health and the slums was overtly based on his Christian faith, much less progress would have been made. Is there anyone in public life today who will carry this torch?

Yours faithfully,
JONATHAN SHEPHERD,
Department of Oral and
Maxillofacial Surgery,
University of Wales,
Heath Park, Cardiff.

From Mr A. H. Isaacs

Sir, Your report of March 3 on the Home Office proposal for new "secure training centres" to hold persistent juvenile offenders appeared alongside an article, "Therapeutic success swept aside", on the recent closure of Peper Harrow at Godalming, Surrey — one of a group of three charity-run residential centres with long experience of treating similar children.

Peper Harrow closed in February because of under-utilisation by local authorities. Its assets consisted mainly of bricks and mortar and a very dedicated staff, and once it began to incur serious income deficiencies it was inevitable that the trustees could not hope to sustain it. In the trustees' view, the closure was largely the result of pressures on local authority finance and the refusal of the departments concerned to countenance any form of central government funding.

Now the Home Office comes along with a proposal which apparently does involve central government funding of amounts considerably in excess of what was the cost per child at Peper Harrow. You report weekly costs per child of up to £2,700. Peper Harrow, at the time of its closure, was costing around £1,200 per week per child. The Home Office talks of the new establishments not being operational until 1994 or 1995.

Government policy seems to be both arbitrary and not cost-effective; but if charitable trustees are to be encouraged to run what are clearly high-risk ventures in a difficult field they must have some satisfactory security against the risk of personal liability for running cost deficiencies which, if closure becomes necessary, are seriously compounded by huge redundancy costs for the staff.

Would not the money that is now suddenly to be available for the new secure units be better spent providing sensible support to charities and others with experience of running therapeutic communities? The best chance of securing better practice and more effective treatment is to remove from these organisations the continuing prospect of insolvency.

Yours faithfully,
A. H. ISAACS
(Chairman of trustees),
Peper Harrow Organisation,
14 Charterhouse Square, EC1.

From Mrs J. K. T. Broad

Sir, You give the cost of rehabilitation for offenders at Glenthorne youth treatment centre, Birmingham, as £2,700 per person per week. This is £300 less than I receive per annum as my state pension.

Yours faithfully,
JOY BROAD,
3 Broad Strand,
Rustington, West Sussex,
March 3.

From Sir Louis Blom-Cooper, QC

Sir, As a member, during the whole period of its life from 1966 to 1978, of the home secretary's advisory council on the penal system, which produced reports on detention centres (1970) and young adult offenders (1974), I feel qualified to echo the views (letter, March 3) of the director general of Save the Children and his co-signatories.

Society will not benefit from the use (and potential over-use) of expensive and untested (even untested) new closed institutions, save for the dubious satisfaction of removing from the community for a limited time a handful of young tearaways. What might be achieved by training these offenders to conform to social dictates can be done more successfully outside high walls.

If it is too late to divert the home secretary from his proposed course of action I have one proposal to make.

The secure training centres should be officially known as Kenneth Clarke Centres. That will at least indicate the architect of the latest edition of the edicts of penal monstrosities.

Yours faithfully,
LOUIS BLOM-COOPER
2 Ripplevale Grove,
Islington, N1,
March 3.

From Mr Bob Dunn, MP for
Dartford (Conservative), and others

Sir, Two points should be made clear in the light of the home secretary's statement to the House of Commons on the need for action against persistent juvenile offenders.

First, that there are a minority of people in our society who are distinctly evilly inclined, and that young children commit offences and terrorise neighbourhoods with the knowledge, and sometimes with the consent, of their parents or parent.

Secondly, that through the agency of television and the video-machine, violence, often of the most sickening and chilling type, is equated with entertainment and thus becomes part of accepted behaviour.

Thus, whilst the provision of new secure training centres is welcomed, the main battle has yet to be joined.

look as unlikely as a common currency.

We value our national seat as a member of the UN Security Council, a position that cannot be sustained as our future military contribution dwindles. It seems a funny time to undermine the morale and competence of one of the few national institutions we believe we can trust, and one that is so vital to our long-term interests.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD SHARPE,
Editor, *Jane's Fighting Ships*,
Foundry House, Kingsley,
Bordon, Hampshire,
March 2.

From Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon, Chief of the Air Staff

Sir, Michael Evans ("RAF dismisses many of its senior officers", March 3), reaches an inaccurate and potentially damaging conclusion when he states that two in every three officers above the rank of squadron leader are threatened with losing their jobs.

In reality decisions have yet to be reached on the size and shape of the next tranche of RAF redundancies and, as with the previous phase, a whole range of ranks, age groups and specialisations will be taken into consideration. An announcement is not likely for some time.

It is, however, clear that the scale of redundancies above the rank of squadron leader will be nowhere near two in three and it remains the RAF's intention to meet its redundancy needs largely by volunteers.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL GRAYDON,
Ministry of Defence,
Main Building,
Whitehall, SW1,
March 3.

discharged over the next three years.

As normal contractors are understandably often afraid of even erecting scaffolding against "dangerous" ruins, how are they to be preserved? Do there have to be fatalities from falling masonry before this Mad Hatter's tea party can be checked?

The government's impromptu considerations that have prompted the present policies of English Heritage are not likely to offer much comfort to relatives bereaved by an accident of this kind.

Yours truly,
MICHAEL THOMPSON,
President, The Society for
Medieval Archaeology,
Charlton House,
The Lawn, Union Road, Lincoln.

Home Office ministers must ensure that penalties are laid against parents when their "under age" offspring behave and act like thugs. Persistent offenders must also be taken to secure centres now to prevent imitative behaviour.

Equally, section 29 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 must be changed immediately, so that magistrates can be made aware of the offender's previous convictions before sentencing for new ones.

It is time that the emphasis of the courts was changed to the defence of the law-abiding in our society — the persecuted majority.

Yours faithfully,
BOB DUNN,
RHODES BOYSON,
JAMES PAWSEY,
House of Commons,
March 3.

From Mr Barry J. Hunt

Sir, The director general of Save the Children and his co-signatories argue that we must "restore hope and create opportunities" for young people.

Such critics of contemporary society neglect the point that existing opportunities have to be taken, as well as new ones provided. Certain opportunities in today's society — in education, for instance — are being squandered by some of the young.

We hear much talk about schools "failing" children, very little about the failure of children to make use of the opportunities available to them. "Restoring hope" is as much the responsibility of children and their parents as of society at large.

Yours sincerely,
BARRY J. HUNT,
2 Claremont Court,
Leeds, West Yorkshire,
March 3.

From Mr Christopher Arthur

Sir, The Children Act 1989 empowered minors to seek the right to brief lawyers to represent their interests in court ("Son in custody dispute too young to choose lawyers", February 27).

Cannot the so-called progressive thinkers see the connection between this kind of nonsense and the growing problem of criminal behaviour among the young? We are living in the age of the mini-adult, when children are being promoted above their proper station in society.

Thirty years ago we had got it about right — alas, we did not know it at the time.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER ARTHUR,
50 Hallgarth Street, Durham,
February 27.

Chess rules

From Mr Stewart Reuben

Sir, Mr Marcel Berlins (letter, February 26) queries the practice of adjourning unfinished chess games.

Clearly it is impossible to play a game of totally unlimited length. The games in the recent Fischer-Spassky encounter showed signs that some results were decided mainly by stamina.

The standard rate of play used to be 40 moves per player in two-and-a-half hours and then adjournment. Forty moves per hour with adjournments after six hours' play, is more modern. About 20 per cent of games were adjourned under the old system, now it is 5 per cent.

Others prefer an eight-hour session of 40 moves per player in two hours, followed by 20 moves in one hour, followed by all the moves in one hour. This has been used at Hastings and provided no problems. I introduced this system with reluctance, particularly at the request of the leading English players.

We try to balance the desire for games of high quality (requiring slow rates of play), with the sporting wish for a rapid result in a finite time. This is not a problem unique to chess; both cricket and tennis have experimented in various ways.

I hope this assures Mr Berlins that the problem is recognised and is being worked at — albeit sometimes so slowly that introducing a chess clock to make us reach a decision seems necessary.

Yours faithfully,
S. REUBEN (Director of Home Chess), British Chess Federation,
9a Grand Parade,
St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex.

Far from comfortable

From Mrs Lindy Price

Sir, Among the least helpful signs or notices that I have seen recently the prize must surely go to the one on the M40, just east of the Oxford turnoff, which reads:

"Emergency WC 20 miles"

Even at 70 mph that would take over a quarter of an hour.

Yours faithfully,
LINDY PRICE,
Moor Park, Llanbedr,
Crickhowell, Powys.

Business letters, page 27

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 071-782 5046.

OBITUARIES

LUIS KUTNER



Luis Kutner, American human rights lawyer who campaigned for six decades for a world-wide code of habeas corpus, died on March 1 aged 84. He was born in Chicago.

LUIS KUTNER believed above all else, as he wrote in his 1970 book *The Human Right to Individual Freedom*, that there was no higher moral or ethical obligation of mankind than to protect the individual against the strong. It was a belief that underlay his entire professional career, whether he was fighting to free an obscure black man wrongly imprisoned for rape, or representing Pope Pius XII in a bid to secure the release of the Hungarian Cardinal Jozsef Mindszenty.

Born of Russian-Jewish immigrant parents, Kutner was a prodigious scholar and entered the University of Chicago at the age of 15. There he soon established himself as a poet, author and musician, but decided on the law as a career.

His early experience included clerking for the famous defence lawyer, Clarence Darrow, while still a student at the

university's law school, and before his graduation at the age of 21 Kutner had already attracted the attention of Roscoe Pound, the Harvard legal scholar.

Kutner first proposed the concept of World Habeas Corpus in 1931, after reading Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and being exposed to the speeches of Joseph Goebbels, Hermann Goering, Ernst Rohm, and Hitler himself.

Appalled by what he read and heard, he began touring the United States to sound the alarm and to campaign for what he called "a personal legal beachhead for mankind".

But, despite backing from some of the leading legal scholars of the time, the plea from the 22-year-old Kutner fell on deaf ears.

"Mein Kampf" spelled out the blueprint for all the world to see," he was to write later. "Arbitrary detention and murder was to be the order of the day. The love of law was to be flouted. But the conscience of the world remained sound asleep. The apathy of the world in general and of the Bar in particular was incredible."

Kutner kept on trying. In 1937 he achieved political influence with the support of the powerful Michigan Senator Arthur Vandenberg, and through him the backing of Eleanor Roosevelt. There were attempts to get the concept of World Habeas Corpus included in the Atlantic Charter, and later in the text of the Human Rights Articles in the United Nations Charter, but they came to nothing.

If he was having little success in his own country, Kutner's views were being listened to overseas. In 1949, together with Cardinal Stritch and Cardinal Spellman, he worked successfully to improve prison conditions for Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary, and later negotiated his release from house arrest at the American Embassy in Budapest.

In 1950, at a conference in London, Sir Winston Churchill declared: "World Habeas Corpus is the difference between civilisation and tyranny," and later that year Kutner saw the principle enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. Five years later, when the right of individual petition became effective,

the remedy of habeas corpus had been extended to 150 million people across Europe.

America, however, was still reluctant. In 1952, while Kutner was struggling to obtain the release of William Otis, an Associated Press correspondent imprisoned in Czechoslovakia, the then Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, described the proposal of World Habeas Corpus as "unworkable," and refused to co-operate with Kutner's efforts at the UN.

But Kutner found other allies. A UN writ was issued, and Otis was subsequently released.

Kutner is also credited with the concept of the "living will," having written his own nearly 60 years ago after witnessing the slow and painful death of a friend who had been the victim of a violent robbery.

Such wills, which allow patients to specify at what stage life-support systems should be shut off when conditions become hopeless, are now legally enforceable in many parts of the United States.

He is survived by Rose, his wife of 59 years, and one son.

DAVID GOW

David Gow, composer, died in Swindon on February 23 aged 68. He was born in London on April 6, 1924.

DAVID GOW wrote concertos for piano, violin, guitar, saxophone, bassoon and trombone, while one of his most recent compositions was a marimba concerto for Evelyn Glennie. He is remembered not merely for his own musical output, though this, somewhat neglected to date, is beginning to be more widely acknowledged. He was valued also for his generous expenditure of time on other musicians and to amateur groups, and as a teacher and lecturer. Thus, during his spell teaching in west London he wrote his *Mini Symphony* for the Hounslow Youth Orchestra, while after he made his final move to Wiltshire, among his works for local groups and choirs was his Quintet for Clarinets of 1974, written for Marlborough College.

In spite of illness, on January 6 he was at the Royal Northern College of Music for the first performance of his cello concerto given by Timothy Hughs and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Adrian Leaper. His piano concerto, written for Philip Martin, was performed by him with the BBC Scottish Orchestra under Sir Charles Groves, by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in Swindon with Vernon Handley, and in Ireland for RTE.

Besides his orchestral output Gow also wrote many song cycles and choral works, and it is through them that he is, perhaps, best known. Stephen Wilkinson and the BBC Northern Singers broadcast *A Little Canasta to the Stars* for voices and percussion, *Star Gazers* for baritone, chorus and organ, *The Wreck of the Deutschland* set to the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins's poem and the cantata, *Walden* for tenor, chorus and piano, written in 1984 to words from Thoreau's narrative, *Walden, or Life in the Woods*. The more recent of his nine string quartets were written for the Magini Quartet, who have played them for radio and in recitals in Britain and Spain.

David Gow was descended from the celebrated 18th-century family of Scottish musicians which began with the violinist and composer, Niel Gow (1727-1807) and had five other notable members, Donald, William, Nathaniel and Niel II. He received his

musical education at the Royal College of Music under Gordon Jacob and Frank Merrick, and later studied composition privately with Alan Bush. He took a BMus at the University of Durham.

He lectured for the WEA, taught liberal arts at Isleworth Polytechnic and then moved to Wiltshire, making his home near Marlborough. He lectured in music at Swindon Technical College until his retirement and for many years he was a tutor for the Open University. Early Wigmore Hall recitals of his work, from the 1950s onwards, suggested the emergence of a high-minded composer and an assured craftsman with a definite destination in view. But the reputation was slow in gaining momentum. It was not until some years later that the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Sinfonietta became frequent performers of his works, often in Swindon where he had, by then, settled.

Though in general his orchestral works are less well known than his choral ones, his *Overture 125*, commissioned by British Rail in 1976 to celebrate the introduction of its 125mph InterCity train service, attracted wider attention for its composer. First heard as a BBC Friday Night *Musical Night* item, broadcast from Bristol, it was also played by a 60-piece orchestra on one of the new InterCity high speed trains travelling from London Paddington to Bristol Temple Meads. In 1989 Gow's Third Symphony — inspired by Thomas Hardy and subtitled *Wessex Heights* — was conducted by Norman del Mar.

Recently Gow went to Czechoslovakia and the Ukraine to lecture on his music and bear it performed in Prague, Bratislava, Brno and Kiev. But though his reputation was latterly becoming an international one, and though he had effectively lived his professional life in southern England, Gow never forgot his Scottish lineage. This was acknowledged in the *Ante-Central Variations* he wrote on a theme from Niel Gow, and in the care he took to make sure that the Scottish Music Information Centre always received a copy of any score he wrote.

His last years were a continual battle against ill-health, but he remained, to the end, creatively unflaggingly cheerful and a source of inspiration to friends and pupils alike. He leaves his widow, Margaret.

ROBERT TRIFFIN

Professor Robert Triffin, Belgium-born international economist, died in Ostend on February 23 aged 81. He was born in Flobecq in 1911.

IT WAS Robert Triffin who, in 1962, foretold the demise of the Bretton Woods agreement on fixed exchange rates. As a determined advocate of reform of world monetary structure he argued that both the dollar and pound sterling should cease to be reserve currencies. Triffin served on a Kennedy administration panel that, in 1961, studied balance of payments problems in the United States and he held senior jobs at the International Monetary Fund.

He also advised the European Community on the creation of the European Monetary System.

In 1962, he predicted the unravelling of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates by identifying what he called "dollar overhang". Triffin said that as foreign countries accumulated more and more dollars from their trade and investment surpluses with the US, they would grow nervous about holding US currency. Ten years later, the Bretton

Woods system — founded at a 1944 meeting in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire — collapsed after President Richard Nixon took the dollar off the gold standard.

Robert Triffin first gained renown as the author of books and articles on international monetary reforms. He emigrated to America in 1935 to complete his studies in economics at Harvard University.

In 1942 he became a US citizen but became a Belgian national again on his return to Europe in 1977 when he was 66. He liked to call himself a "world citizen". Triffin studied economics at Louvain before going to the US. Following his retirement in 1977 he returned to Belgium as a guest lecturer at the Catholic University of Louvain. His books included *Europe and the Money Machine* and *Gold and the Dollar*.

IN THE obituary of Wiltshire-born Lt-Gen Sir Henry Pownall, it was incorrectly stated that he was the son of Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Pownall. He was, in fact, his stepson — being the only child of Lady Pownall's first marriage to Captain John Gray who was killed in the first world war.

LOTTE LASERSTEIN

Lotte Laserstein, the last great survivor from the heyday of German realist painting, died in Kalmars, Sweden, on January 24 aged 94. She was born in Prussia on November 28, 1898.

THE return of Lotte Laserstein to public attention in 1987, with an extensive London exhibition, could not help but seem odd to her. From her own point of view, she had never been away from it. Though she had travelled and changed countries, she had never stopped painting, and had never lacked patrons.

But to most people outside Sweden, her adopted land, her work, when it was exhibited internationally, again, came like a trumpet blast from the past. And yet it seemed amazingly of the present: a certain kinship might immediately be recognised, in colouring, style and general approach, between her large, dashing painted nudes and the most recent work of Lucian Freud.

Where had she been for the previous half-century? The literal answer is Sweden. Harassed by the Nazis (she was a quarter-Jewish), she had been forced to close her Berlin studio in 1935, and a major success with her first show as a commercial gallery in Stockholm in 1937 seemed providential. She stayed on, then settled when the war came, and was still living largely in Stockholm at the time of her death.

In Sweden her reputation was almost entirely as a portrait painter. She never wanted for commissions and was still making portrait drawings regularly in her nineties, as well as exhibiting at the Konstnarnes Riks, the Swedish Academy of Art, of which she was a member for more than 50 years. She also continued to paint her favourite model from the 1920s, the tennis

player Traute Rose, who had been instrumental in getting her paintings out of Germany in 1938 and, with her husband Ernst, also an old friend, visited Laserstein in Sweden annually after the war.

In the wider sense of the term, portraiture made up most of Laserstein's output throughout her working life, but few of the earlier paintings were formal portraits. Rather, she loved to paint the human figure, nude or clothed, male or female, and devoted herself entirely to it. Several of her most famous paintings, such as *Artist and Model* in the *Studio, Berlin, Wilmsdorf* (1929) and the splendid group around a table of approximately the same date, *The Roof Garden, Potsdam*, have finely rendered landscapes in the background, but she never seems to have been tempted to bring such background to the fore.

Only models of very special qualities could work with her (or for her), as she was quite merciless in her demands. Tireless and buoyantly healthy herself, she worked long hours without flagging and expected her models to do the same, holding difficult poses if required for hours at a stretch.

Traute Rose's husband, one of the figures in the Potsdam picture, endured valiantly one of the most tiresome poses. But on the whole, Laserstein had difficulties with men sitting for their portraits, since they tended to fidget.

The foundations of Laserstein's amazing technique were laid early. Sketchbooks of great accomplishment survive from her 11th year, and she determined at that age, she maintained, to become a professional artist and never marry. When she was 18 she entered the Berlin Academy of Arts where she remained for six years, the last two as "Atelier

Meisterschüler" — which meant that she was regarded as the star pupil and had a right to her own studio at the academy. In 1925 she went on to win the gold medal, the academy's highest award.

She had to support herself with routine jobs in rug and toy design, china decoration (like her mother before her) and illustrating an anatomical textbook which required long periods spent in the company of bodies preserved in hydrochloric acid. After leaving, she set up her own studio and rapidly achieved her mature style which was like a looser, more fluid version of the Neue Sachlichkeit, a very precise form of realism then dominant in German painting. She also taught, until the Nazis found her pupils' choice of subjects among the peasant poor suspicious, and travelled when she could afford to, making significant painting trips to Paris, Florence and Rome.

After the war she began to travel again, renting a house in Provence for several summers and making sketching trips to southern Spain and Greece with the Swedish painter Else Celcius. She never cared to return to Germany for any length of time — understandably, as her mother (who was not Jewish) had been persecuted for harbouring her sister Kate and had eventually died in Ravensbrück concentration camp.

When she last visited London in 1990, Laserstein was still inexhaustible, bright as a bird, and slightly intimidating. When asked what she thought of Lucian Freud (the comparison has frequently come up) she said briskly: "The technique is extraordinary but his nudes are... too nude."

As keeper of the flame of realism for some eighty years, she knew what she was talking about.



Traute in the Mirror, an oil on canvas by Lotte Laserstein featuring her favourite model, the tennis player Traute Rose

PERSONAL COLUMN

RENTALS

COVENT GARDEN Level 1 bed flat, 17/18/19 & 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MOTURING

This week's Geneva Motor Show has seen the launch of models which are important to the future of the British car industry

Quality bond in bargain basement

Aston Martin's first DB car for more than 20 years has stolen the show, reports Vaughan Freeman

Cars from Britain are central to the Geneva Motor Show, which opened this week, and none has had more impact than the glamorous offerings from Aston Martin.

After more than two years of slump, United Kingdom sales figures released this week showed an increase of more than 16 per cent for February compared with February 1992, although sales in the rest of Europe continue to be depressed — sales in Germany dropped by 15 per cent last month, in Italy sales fell by 10 per cent — and have been accompanied by a depressing number of redundancies. At Peugeot's Ryton works in Coventry, for example, 3,500 workers were laid off last week.

Because of these factors, the various British launches here have taken on added significance. On stands neighbouring Aston Martin, Vauxhall's Corsa, which is expected to be a big seller in Britain, and Peugeot's 306, were unveiled alongside Ford's Mondeo.

None the less, when the show first opened, the camera flashguns were aimed towards Aston Martin's new DB7 and the conceptual Lagonda Vignale, between them the embodiment of hand-craftsmanship and British motor-racing heritage. The crowds soon gathered.

For the first time since the DB6 ceased production in 1971, the DB badge, which pays homage to Sir David Brown, the owner of Aston Martin Lagonda from 1947 to 1972, is back. The DB7 goes on



Swift and sleek: the Aston Martin DB7, the first to carry the badge since the DB6 went out of production in 1971, goes on sale next year for around £80,000

sale in Britain next year for "below £80,000", and will thus become Aston Martin's "bargain basement" offering.

The DB7 is the first Aston Martin to be produced at the firm's facility at Blitham in Oxfordshire. It is built in the classic British sports-car tradition, its front-mounted six-cylinder, 3.2-litre engine drives through the rear wheels and will take the two-plus-two car to a top speed of 165 mph, some 17 mph faster than its illustrious predecessor, the DB6.

As well as such awesome performance, the car reflects traditional craftsmanship, with Wilton carpeting, hand-tooled leather and burr walnut woodcrafting. Aston Martin plans to produce 300 DB7s in 1994, and 600 a year from 1995.

Walter Hayes, the executive chairman of Aston Martin Lagonda, says the DB7 represents the firm's future, but looking even further forward, while drawing on the company's past, is the new Lagonda.

Aston Martin has not built a

Lagonda for almost 40 years, but it plans to rectify this with the Vignale. The company admits the car is only a study at the moment, but it has linked up with Ghia Design, of Turin, and is determined to turn the concept car into a production model by the end of the decade.

The Lagonda Vignale is a four-door saloon which matches luxury to performance. It is likely to be powered by a specially developed V12 engine, and to feature a steering wheel that moves back and

forth to allow ease of entry, nickel-finished details, leather and traditional wood trim.

Owners of earlier Lagondas may not recognise other details, such as the on-board navigational system and laptop computers built-in for rear seat passengers. "We believe there is a right and natural place for the hand-made luxury car in the future, but it has to be fuel-efficient and innovative, and capable of being a

car for life," Mr Hayes says.

"Although we have no firm programme for the production of a car of this type, we believe it is appropriate to investigate and research its appeal with potential customers." Both cars affirm Aston Martin's determination not just to ensure the survival of the company, but to develop during the next decade in a world where individually crafted cars — and customers who consider it impolite to ask about the cost — represent a long-lost age of motoring.

ROADWISE IN GENEVA

Inflatable safety factors

SAFETY remains the theme for motoring this year.

Here this week, Ford announced that all its Fiesta, Escort, Orion, Mondeo and Scorpio models will offer driver-side and passenger-side airbags by January 1994. The Ford bags inflate when electronic sensors detect an impact at a speed greater than 10mph, thereby ensuring that they do not inflate during minor parking bumps and scrapes.

No accident

FIGURES from the transport department show Britain's roads are among the safest in the world.

Figures for 1990, the latest available and just released, show Britain's figure of 94 road accident deaths per million population is the lowest out of 23 countries, including America and Japan. Only Norway, Sweden and Holland did better. The UK's car user death rate, per billion vehicle kilometres travelled, at 7.1, was half the European Community average.

Edge of the seat

VAUXHALL is attempting to steal Ford's thunder in the safety war between manufacturers. Ford had hoped its Mondeo would be the first mid-range car in Britain to have a driver's side airbag fitted as standard. Vauxhall has piped Ford to the post by fitting driver side air bags as standard on all



Cavaliers, with no increase in price. The Cavaliers also have seatbelt tensioners, to hold occupants securely in the event of an accident.

Lotus in a spinner

YOUR washing machine and dishwasher could soon be tuned into race-trim by Lotus.

The Norfolk-based sports car and engineering firm, having helped Chris Boardman, the cyclist, win gold at the Olympics, has now been called in to help kitchen equipment manufacturers to design machines that do not rattle noisily all over the kitchen floor. Lotus is expanding its engineering consultancy as its car side struggles.

Royle restoration

A £2.1 million one-off conversion weighing 3.5 tonnes and 23ft in length is one of the more extravagant cars at this week's Geneva Motor Show. The car, finished by the classic restorers, Royle, of Co Durham, is based on a Rolls-Royce Phantom VI with the coachwork by Frua. The 6.2l V8 car features television, video, rotating drinks cabinet and fridge freezer as well as lashings of burr walnut, Wilton carpets and hide upholstery.

Little red book

THE latest edition of the little red book which is essential reading for every France-bound motorist is out now. The *Michelin Red Guide* recommends 6,835 hotels and 4,427 restaurants. A total of 591 hotels receive the Michelin star for cuisine, but only 19 get the top three-star rating.

Lots of room, bags of vroom

When television's Dr Who travelled through time and space, it was in his Tardis, which from the outside looked like a cramped blue police constable's telephone booth yet inside housed cavernous halls and corridors. Vaughan Freeman writes.

Vauxhall's new Corsa, shown off here this week, seems similarly to defy the laws of physics. On the outside, the car is a compact and stylish package. But inside, the replacement for the Nova is far and away the roomiest small car I have ever driven.

As I am 6ft 4in, even big saloons sometimes seem cramped to me. In the Corsa I had a good inch and a half clearance above my head in the front. With the driver's seat pushed fully back, I could almost straighten my legs. In the back of the car, even a six-footer has ample headroom. The car was designed to carry five 6ft people, together with 75kg of luggage, and it seems to be up to the task.

All this roominess is achieved in a car which at just over 12ft is only 3in longer than the Nova. This has been achieved simply by pushing out the wheels to the four corners, so maximising interior space. Also, the windscreen has been moved forward seven inches.

The car goes on sale in Britain on April 2, and will give the manufacturers of its main rivals, the Fiesta

Vauxhall's latest small car, the Corsa, has already sold 50,000 — to a school of motoring

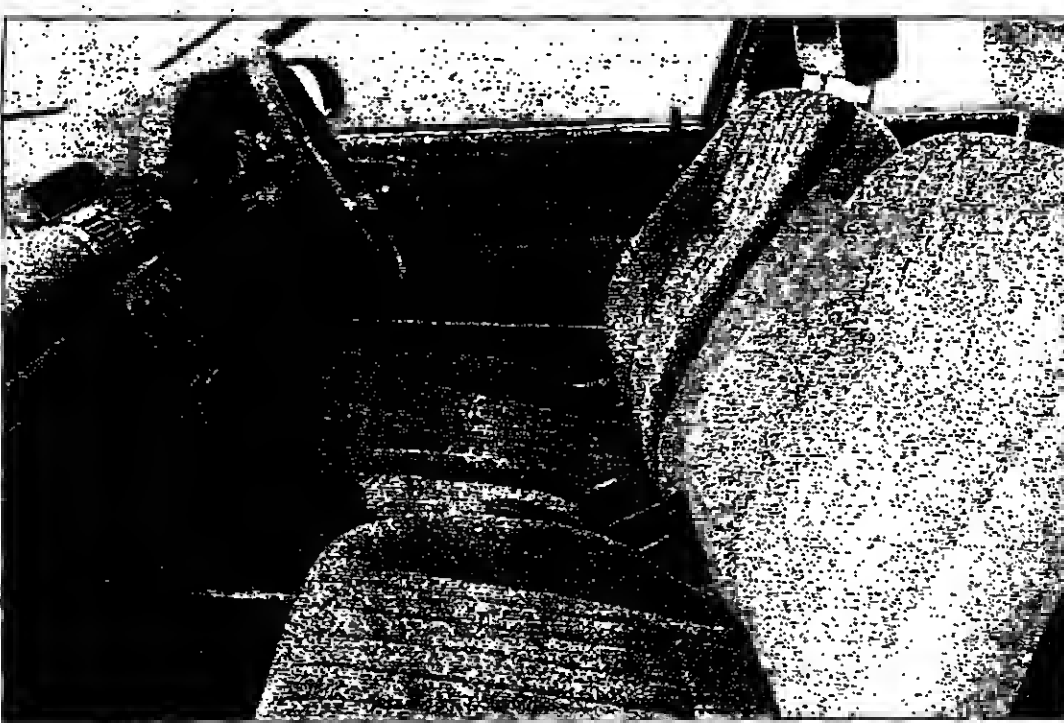
from Ford, the Nissan Micra, 106 from Peugeot and Clio from Renault, much to think about.

Externally, the car is rounded and curvy, with what Vauxhall calls its "fun and functional" shape. Inside, the seats offer excellent support.

All of the main dials are uncluttered and clear, and a binnacle mounted on top of the dashboard houses the clock, radio details and outside-temperature gauge. The controls for radio and ventilation are chunky and oversized, eliminating the blind scramble most of us are used to when trying to find Radio 4 and demist while on the move.

Typically for Vauxhall, considerable emphasis has been placed on safety. Twin side-impact bars are standard across the range, as are "body lock" front seat-belt tensioners.

Air-bags and anti-lock braking is



Things greater are in less contained: small on the outside, the Corsa is amply roomy inside

either standard or an option on all models. The 1.2l engine is Vauxhall's economy unit and returns a claimed 64mpg at 56mph, some 10mpg more than the Nova.

Other options available are 1.4l and 1.6l petrol engines and a 1.5l diesel. With the five-speed manual gearbox, the "learner's special" is mild-mannered, comfortable and relaxing to drive. It cruises comfortably at 70 mph and above. Handling is good, although when parking, I found the steering, which is not power-assisted, was too heavy.

The top of the range 1.6-valve

1.6l GSi features every conceivable creature comfort and has the roominess you would expect in a bigger car costing twice as much.

With the GSi, the 1598cc engine produces 109bhp, which takes the car to 121 mph and does 0-60 mph in nine seconds. The GSi is the "fun" element of the Corsa package, and it certainly delivers. On rough roads though, the sports suspension of the GSi gives a harsh ride, and the power steering is too light.

For Vauxhall the 1.2l and 1.4l engines versions are the key. The small-car sector, now epitomised by

Corsa and the Micra, is where manufacturers are advancing most rapidly in design, with innovations of interior space, safety and economy.

Vauxhall's chairman, Bill Ebbert, says: "The new Corsa may be a compact car, but it offers the kind of technological profile that until now has been found only on larger cars."

"We believe it may prove to be a trend-setter for a new class of car, the grown-up small car. Before you have even sat in the seats there is a great feeling of space."

This small-car market is where

first-time buyers or families looking for a second car do their car-shopping, and here Vauxhall have moved swiftly.

The company is to sell 50,000 Corsas, most of them 1.2l manuals, to the British School of Motoring over the next ten years in a deal worth £400 million at showroom prices.

Of the 85,000 people who pass their test every year with BSM, 43 per cent buy a car within three months of passing. Since 50 per cent of Vauxhall owners buy another Vauxhall, using Corsa to put motorists on the first rung of the ladder of Vauxhall ownership is clearly a crucial element in the Corsa equation.

The drawback with the Corsa, at least as far as the Chancellor of the Exchequer is concerned, is that it is built in Germany and Spain, rather than in Britain, and Vauxhall hopes to sell 50,000 a year. In total, the Nova sold 500,000 in the United Kingdom.

The Corsa is launched on April 2 in three-door form, with a five-door version to follow. Prices have yet to be announced, but are likely to be only 2 per cent above the Nova's price range of £6,000 to £11,500.

Vauxhall Corsa 1.2l

Engine: 1195cc four-cylinder petrol engine, driving through front wheels and five-speed manual gearbox, giving 45 bhp at 5,000 rpm.

Performance: top speed 90 mph; 0-60 in 18sec.

Economy: 39 mpg in town, 64 mpg at 56 mph and 45 mpg at 75 mph.

Price: to be announced.

Peugeot's little pretender lacks the 205's panache

The international nature of motor manufacture means that while the Peugeot sounds French, its new 306 will be manufactured in, among other places, Britain.

The 306, also launched at this week's Geneva show, is designed to help to replace the long-running 205. The 205, introduced ten years ago, has already sold 4.75 million and so loath is Peugeot to part with it, that despite the introduction of the 306, the 205 will still be built at the rate of 700 a day for the foreseeable future.

The 205 is one of a select band of cars which despite being churned out by the millions, still manages to exude charm and individuality. Little surprise, then, that the 306 has more than a passing resemblance to its predecessor.

The 306 has cost £500 million to develop. Peugeot's Ryton factory is already building 100 a day in readiness for the April debut of the 306 in the UK. Production of

The Peugeot 306 has a lot to live up to, but the new standard model may be too safe to win converts from the 205

the 306 in Britain will rise to 350 cars daily. It will be built in France and Spain, and total daily production could rise to 2,500.

The 306 is the big brother of the recently-launched Peugeot 106 mini-sized car, and this duo is aimed at eventually replacing the pairing of the 205 and 309 entirely. The 306 will compete with the Vauxhall Astra and VW Golf among others.

The 306 goes on sale initially in five-door hatchback form, although a three-door hatch is to come. The car is just over 13 ft long, and power-steering, either as an optional extra or as standard on more expensive versions, makes the car easy to drive in town and to park in tight spaces.

There will be four levels of trim, specification, and prices, which

will be announced when the cars go on sale. The range starts with the 1.4l (75 bhp) XN, and, at the top of the range, is the XT with a 1.6l or 1.8l (103 bhp) engine. A 2l 16-valve version was also unveiled at Geneva, and diesel versions will follow.

The basic XN has as standard an adjustable steering wheel, anti-intrusion sidebars in the doors, and remote-release fuel flap. Optional extras include anti-lock braking, power-steering and a 40/60 split folding rear seat.

Standard equipment on the range-topping XT is good, with electric front windows, central door locking and power-steering. Options include air-conditioning and anti-lock brakes. The 306 is roomy inside at the front, even for a 6ft 4in driver and a 6ft

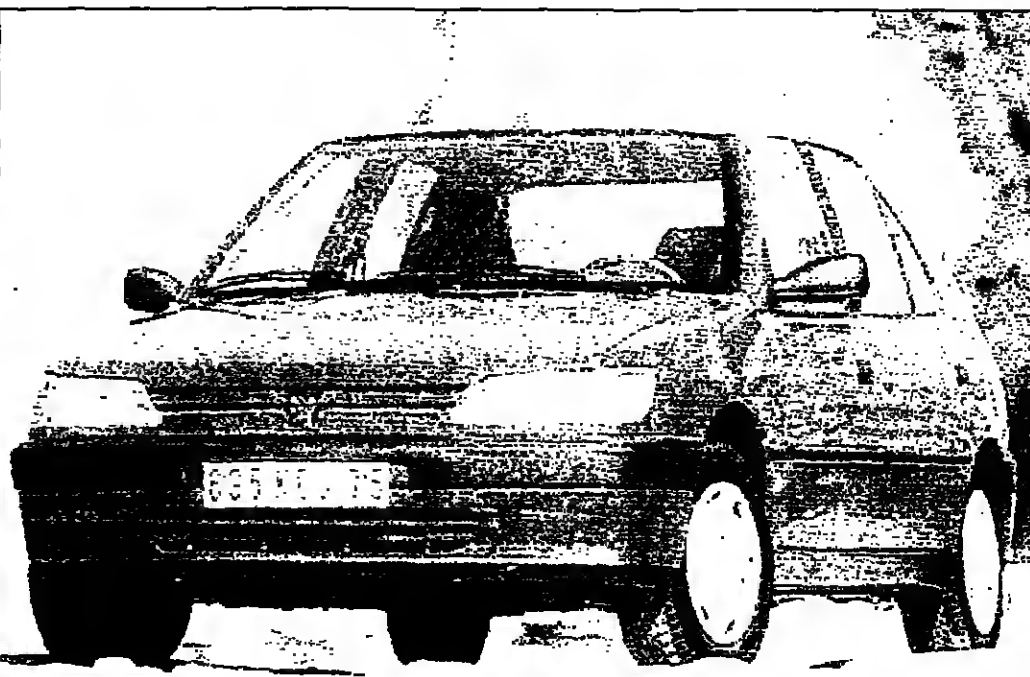
passenger, but leaves little leg-room for rear-seat passengers.

The seats lack support and there were a few ruggles on the model tested, such as a rattling interior light. The unimaginative interior trim colours and drab plastic shows that some details could be improved.

The 1.4l engine has to be worked fairly hard to move the car along, for the 306 is not a light vehicle. The 1.8l XT I drove was loaded with all the optional equipment including anti-lock brakes, making it a cossetting car to drive.

Performance is good and lively, but like its smaller-engined cousins, the front-wheel-drive XT is at its best on corners and bends, with excellent handling. The 306 is an attractive, competent vehicle, but it lacks the must-have element. Sportier derivations may establish it as a true 205 successor, but pricing and reliability will determine its success where it counts, in the sales charts.

VAUGHAN FREEMAN



New version of an old style: the Peugeot 306 XR

NEWS

Major reforms honours system

John Major yesterday announced sweeping reforms of the honours system in a step towards his classless society. Launching a system based on merit rather than class, the prime minister said that members of the public could recommend "deserving cases" for honours by filling in forms supplied by Downing Street.

He heralded the end of automatic knighthoods for top mandarins and the abolition of traditional class distinctions for many awards, including military medals. **Pages 1, 16, 17**

Barclays Bank in the red

Barclays Bank has plunged into the red to the tune of £242 million, the first loss in its 97-year history, brought on by £2.55 billion provisions against bad debts after a series of company collapses. Barclays was the only one of the four big clearing banks to report losses. **Pages 1, 5, 17, 23, 27, 28**

Bomb arrest

The White House says a man has been arrested in connection with last Friday's bombing of the World Trade Centre. The man was an American connected with a Muslim fundamentalist organisation. **Page 1**

Formula scrapped

The home secretary is to end the formula that gives police an annual pay rise linked to inflation. He has decided that the arrangement, introduced in 1979 when conditions in the police service and recruitment needed to be improved, is out-of-date. **Page 2**

Bland protest

Jim Howe, the physician who cared for Tony Bland for four years until his death on Wednesday night, said he had absolutely no second thoughts about his actions and appealed to pro-life campaigners to let the matter be. **Page 3**

Bishops close to deal

Roman Catholic bishops are close to agreeing a formula to allow Anglican clergy opposed to the ordination of women to join the Catholic church but retain their priesthood and elements of Anglican identity. **Page 7**

Manufacturing push

John Major and the Conservatives remain fond of the language of the free market, but the longest recession since the 1930s may be pushing the government into a more active policy to boost manufacturing. **Page 8**

Key to successful evolution

Adolescence, often seen as a time of acne, emotional anxiety and sometimes delinquent behaviour, has been a key ingredient in humanity's evolutionary success. Professor Barry Bogin says adolescence allows humans to acquire their social roles as progenitors and parents uniquely well, offering girls time to learn and boys time to make mistakes. **Page 9**

Flood fears

People living along England's east coast were yesterday preparing flood defences against a North Sea tidal surge. Some are considering moving if strong winds twist in from the north to pile up water against newly repaired sea defences. **Page 9**

Disturbing picture

As the armed siege of the Branch Davidian cult in Waco entered its fifth day, a more disturbing picture of its bizarre religious world has begun to emerge, prompting fears that the group may be contemplating mass suicide today. **Page 11**

Safe passage

Bosnian Serb commanders have agreed in principle to allow temporary safe passage for tens of thousands of Muslims trapped in the besieged enclaves of Cerska, Zepa and Srebrenica. UN peacekeepers said. Relief workers in the Bosnian-controlled city of Tuzla are bracing themselves for a massive influx of refugees after the apparent fall of Cerska. **Page 12**

Similar predicaments

The struggle between Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin in 1990 and 1991 was characterised by chasms of aim, method and character, and mutual loathing. The persistence of Mr Yeltsin paid off in the aftermath of the failed coup, but his predicament today has a strange closeness to that of his predecessor. **Page 13**



Left ajar: a Thai soldier stands guard among thousands of jars left behind by Cambodian refugees being repatriated by the UN. The jars, used by about 130,000 refugees to hold water in the camps, are on sale to local villagers at a dollar apiece.

BUSINESS

Bank loss: Barclays Bank incurred pre-tax losses of £242 million in 1993 after provisions of £2.55 billion against bad debts, and is halving the final dividend. **Page 23**

Brighter outlook: Berkeley Group, the housebuilder, and Hambro Countrywide, the estate agency, says the housing market showed signs of recovery for the past three months. **Page 23**

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index of leading shares closed down 13.8 at 2,904.8 as dealers took profits after a strong run earlier this week. The pound gained 37 cents against the dollar, closing at \$1.4537, but fell 85 pence against the German mark to DM2.3756. **Page 26**

SPORT

Cricket: Navjot Sidhu hit an unbeaten 134 to give India a three-wicket victory in the fifth one-day international against England in Gwalior. He helped the home side to pass England's 256 — Robin Smith scored 129 — with 12 balls remaining. **Page 44**

Athletics: The doping commission of the International Amateur Athletic Federation meets in Paris today to consider an alleged positive drugs test on the Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson, who is maintaining his silence over the affair. **Page 44**

Football: "I have never been to Wembley, never even been to a semi-final," Sheffield United manager Dave Bassett says as his side prepares for tomorrow's FA Cup tie against Blackburn Rovers. **Page 40**

MODERN TIMES

Glorious history: "The blithe news from Hampstead this week that a small branch library there has been reprieved for one year by the efforts of artistic, thoughtful Camden dwellers (among them Margaret Drabble, Mervyn Bragg, Alan Bennett, Fay Weldon, John Tusi, Beryl Bainbridge) is parochial but symbolic." Valerie Grove on the Roman forum of our times, the library. **Page 15**

Gender bias: By 1986 the first 46 franchised gender clinics in Asia, Africa, North and Latin America had helped 263 couples to have a boy. And 15 to have a girl. Libby Purves on the implications of a British clinic for the Asian community here. **Page 14**

The white stuff: The Tate Gallery is showing the minimalist paintings of the American abstract artist Robert Rauschenberg. You can't miss them, nearly all are in various shades of white. **Page 37**

Harry's humalong: The comedian Harry Enfield began a six-part television series last night which aims to introduce the delights of opera to those who have never stepped over the threshold of the Coliseum or the Garden. It deserves to succeed, says The Times opera critic. **Page 38**

Life after grunge: Has grunge rock had its day? The latest specimens to hit London have disappointed even the most diehard grunge fanatics. Plus top ten albums of the week; and latest record releases. **Page 39**

Swift and sleek: Aston Martin's first DB car for more than 20 years has stolen the limelight at the Geneva Motor Show. **Page 21**

Caption video: A new system from America means that deaf people will be able to gain more enjoyment from watching video films in their own homes. **Pages 31-6**

Two-computer families: The age of the family with a portable computer in the office, the car or the kitchen is dawning. **Page 33**

Miniature miracle: Choosing a portable computer is largely about compromise, especially when it comes to a decision on cost. **Page 35**



The Russia government is asking for the return of the ashes of the ballerina Anna Pavlova, which are kept in a London crematorium. **Page 5**



Michael Morris, the deputy speaker, told the Commons that the amendment deleting the social protocol from the Maastricht bill was out of order. **Page 10**



Hanna Suchocka, the Polish prime minister, borrowing lessons from Margaret Thatcher, has steered her government through some nasty squalls. **Page 13**



Ian McGeechan, the rugby coach, takes Gavin Hastings and his Scotland side to Twickenham for the last time tomorrow. **Page 42**

A classic of the sixties is back. *Dr Finlay* (TV, 9pm) features David Rintoul in the title role, with Ian Bannen as old Dr Cameron and Annette Crosbie as their wily housekeeper in more tales of Tarnochbrae. **Page 43**

OPINION

Passing the buck

Had Mr Major sounded contrite in his interview, he might have won plaudits for honesty. Instead, he looked as if he was dishonestly shifting blame onto colleagues which he could more humbly have shouldered himself. **Page 17**

The perils of lending

Sober bankers have fallen over each other to lend to the latest boom sector. They have put the desire to outdo their rivals ahead of the simple lesson that bubbles always burst. **Page 17**

Up to a point

If you gave politicians knighthoods for merit rather than loyalty, you would stand the system on its head and that mischievous but talented trouble-maker Julian Critchley would be the only one of his ilk with a knighthood, rather than the only one without. **Page 17**

JANET DALEY

Given that trying to limit what people may believe, or do with their lives as a result of their beliefs, smacks of thought policing, what can be done about the unscrupulous zealot? **Page 16**

JOHN GRIGG

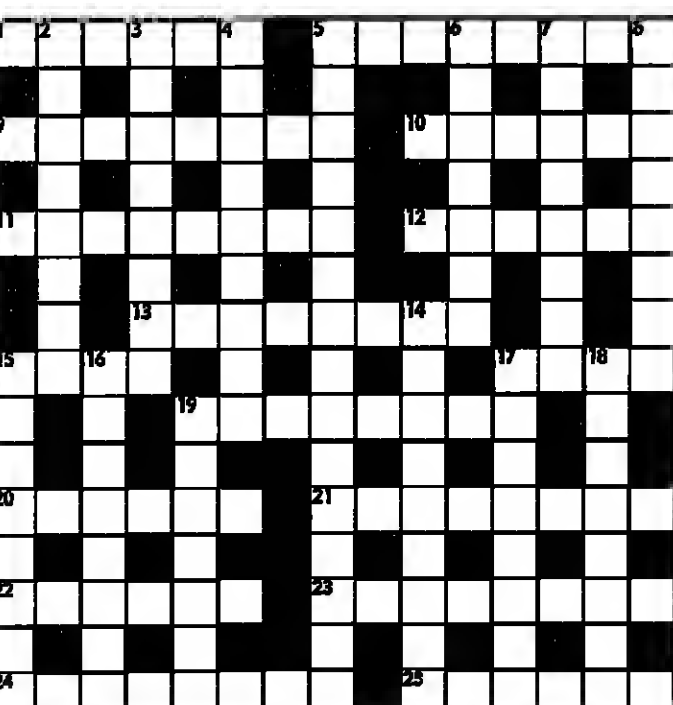
The justification for honours is that they can provide a criterion of public achievement and merit that is quite distinct from, and not dictated by, power or wealth. Much of the really valuable work is done by people who do not hold important offices. It is right that such people should be honoured. Unfortunately, our honours system has given too much recognition to those who are already prominent. **Page 16**

Weaknesses are pointed out in Kenneth Clarke's proposals for a crackdown on juvenile crime. **Page 17**

PAPERS

Foreign policy by symbolism is a tricky notion. The problem is that symbolic gestures are just that, unless they stand for something more. *The Washington Times*

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 19,170



ACROSS

- The special latitude of a king to interrupt a subject (6).
- Centre of activity for a company — one with pride (8).
- Sort of blonde, but not brassy (9).
- Hospital dropping a line saying how a patient is? (6).
- The uniform for domestic duties (8).
- Instant tetch? What a yarn! (6).
- American city girl with a classical dress (8).
- Dry outback for the Amish, for example (4).
- Transfer germ when conversing (4).
- Perhaps run gala by river, where it's sandy (8).
- Reception is available to callers (2,4).

Solution to Puzzle No 19,169



- Indiscriminate land measure causing widespread loss (8).
- Where to make cold buffet (6).
- Judicial authority recalled point in hearing (8).
- Canines offered as gifts by desperate people (3-5).
- Name inscribed in ships' bows (6).

- Confidence in cereal product (8).
- Shortest point — that's the way (8).
- It sounds like a chestnut on old King William (9).
- Termination of court action on three counts (4,3,3,5).
- The habitat of the water-bombardier? (7).
- Note in one column can be copied (8).
- Sort of true Englishman can obviously count a lot (8).
- It's carried by the Colonel of the Life Guards or his staff (4,5).
- A devotee of sensual vices in the original bestiary (8).
- Pool money first for woolen material (8).
- Puppet man (8).
- Hair-do or nail manicure? A stud doesn't need all of this (8).
- Wild birds round the marsh are yellow (7).

Concise Crossword, page 44

TIMES WEATHERCALL

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0800 500 followed by the appropriate code.

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AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic and roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0336 401 followed by the appropriate code.

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NATIONAL TRAFFIC AND ROADWORKS

For the latest AA traffic and roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0336 401 followed by the appropriate code.

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M1/M25/M4/M10	800

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TELEVISION
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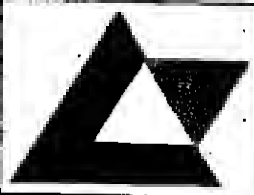
THE TIMES

FRIDAY MARCH 5 1993

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BUSINESS TODAY

WRITING OFF



Heavy property write-offs resulted in an 81 per cent slump in full-year profits at Ladbroke Group
Page 25, *Tempus* 27

CLAWING BACK

The EC will attempt to recoup up to £70 million from British Aerospace for the Rover sweeteners affair
Page 25

SLIDING DOWN



Philips Electronics will embark on another reorganisation, axing up to 15,000 jobs in a bid to return to profit
Page 24, *Tempus* 27

PAYING UP

Lautro has imposed a record £130,000 fine on Colonial Mutual for failing to put its house in order
Page 25

THE POUND

US \$100 = 1.4537 (+0.0037)
German mark = 2.3758 (+0.0005)
Exchange index = 77.3 (-0.1)
Bank of England official close (4pm)

STOCK MARKET

FT-SE 100 = 2904.8 (-13.8)
Dow Jones = 3383.51 (-10.53)
Nikkei Ave = 16769.01 (-94.31)

INTEREST RATES

London Bank Base = 6%
3-month interbank = 6.75%
US Federal Funds = 5%
3-month Treasury Bills = 2.89-2.89%
Long Bond = 6.71%

CURRENCIES

New York: London £1 = 1.4540
\$1 = 1.4543
\$DM = 1.6356
\$SWF = 1.5175
\$Yen = 1.5508
\$Yen = 116.77
\$SDR = 1.0521
London Foreign market close

GOLD

London Fixing (\$):
AM 328.50 PM 328.05
Close = 328.05-328.55
New York:
Comex = 328.85-329.35

RETAIL PRICES

RPI = 137.9 January (1.7%)
* Denotes midday trading price

Barclays dives to £242m loss and cuts dividend

Man who shares blame for losses

By PATRICIA TEHAN

■ The factors that put Barclays into the red for the first time — the property slump and other bad debts — will hit profits again this year, shareholders are warned

By PATRICIA TEHAN

THE full effect of Barclays Bank's disastrous decision to go for growth in the mid-1980s was brought home to shareholders yesterday as the bank reported £242 million pre-tax losses and a cut in dividend from 21.15p to 15.15p.

Despite the poor figures, which compare with a £533 million pre-tax profit in 1991, Andrew Buxton, chairman and chief executive, declined to tell ordinary shareholders whether those responsible have suffered. Asked whether he was going to step down, he replied: "No".

Barclays' shares slumped 41p to 392p and analysts took out red pens to cut forecasts for the current year. Rod Barrett, banking analyst at Goldman Sachs, has cut his 1993 forecast from £600 million to £470 million profit before tax after £2.1 billion bad debt provisions. He expects the dividend to stay at 15.15p for the next two years.

Last year's bad debt provisions, up from £1.5 billion to £2.5 billion, topped City forecasts and were far worse than the other three leading high street clearing banks, comparing with National Westminster's £1.9 billion.

Barclays' huge exposure to the property market was at the heart of its bad debt problems. Of the £2.5 billion provisions figure, £600 million related to 27 large loans, including the collapsed property group Imry where Barclays made a £240 million provision.

The decision to cut the dividend, though unpopular among some investors, was welcomed by one institutional investor, who described Mr

Buxton and the Barclays board as "quite courageous". He said: "As a shareholder, I am happier that he cuts it now rather than maintain an uncovered dividend and then ask for £1 billion in the future which would have already been frittered away." Barclays could "no longer depend on raising fresh capital from outside".

However, another leading institutional investor said he was concerned about the "projection of confidence" from the bank and feared there would be more bad news to come.

Last year was the second successive year that the bank has had to pay dividends out of reserves. Mr Buxton said it was "difficult to forecast the outcome for 1993, but said: "We expect over the longer term to maintain our policy of providing real increases to our shareholders." The cut saved Barclays £100 million and helped limit the fall in its tier 1 capital ratio, which fell from 5.9 per cent to 5.5 per cent. If the dividend had been maintained, it would have fallen to 5.4 per cent.

Mr Buxton said the bank's view of the likely level of provisioning this year was uncertain. He said any growth in the annual dividend from this level would reflect future profits.

The loss came after the bad debt write-offs, an £82 million charge against business disposals, a £60 million write-down in the value of surplus properties and £102 million of costs relating to staff reductions and relocation.

The banking division made a loss of £251 million (£252 million profit in 1991). BZW,



In the spotlight: Andrew Buxton, Barclays' chairman and chief executive, after announcing £242 million losses yesterday

the securities division, shed a ray of light with a 13 per cent jump in pre-tax profits to £241 million. The services business division recorded a small profit of £3 million (£6 million loss).

Looking ahead, Mr Buxton had few words of comfort. He said the factors affecting results over the past two years

were continuing. Property and construction sectors continued to suffer from the recession.

Mr Buxton said Barclays has three main tasks to reduce operating costs and the cost-income ratio; to improve risk management and to improve the quality of service to customers. The bank cut 6,400 jobs and 189 branches last

year and has said another 9,000 jobs will go over the next three years and 350 branches will close over the next two. Mr Buxton said there are no plans at present to introduce "across the board" charges for personal account customers in credit.

He said that his chairman's salary this year would be at

least 10 per cent lower than that of Sir John Quinlan, his predecessor, which he said was "appropriate" given the bank's performance and the pay restrictions being imposed on staff.

Tempus, page 27
City Diary, page 27
Banking on property, page 28

BARCLAYS Bank's catastrophic attempts during the 1980s to be the biggest and best bank by 1991 culminated yesterday in the first losses and first cut in dividend payments in its 97-year history.

Although the ambition was that of Sir John Quinlan, the former chairman, Andrew Buxton, the 53-year old current chairman and chief executive, and a member of one of the old founding families of Barclays, is just as closely associated with the disastrous lending decisions.

In the words of a director of one worried institutional investor: "Andrew Buxton cannot be totally blameless for what has happened over the last few years."

The director is among those putting pressure on Barclays to split the role of chairman and chief executive, which Mr Buxton has held since January.

Barclays ambition to be "number 1 by 1991" led the bank into a series of large loans to property developers and construction companies.

The bank had cut back on lending in the early 1980s and lost its lead as Britain's most profitable bank to National Westminster.

Under Sir John, the bank reversed its policy. The decision was described in a massive understatement by one City observer yesterday as "harrowed".

As Mr Buxton yesterday reported a £242 million pre-tax loss, a 28 per cent slump in the dividend to 15.15p and bad debt write-offs of £2.55 billion, his refusal to say when he will split the top job came in for increasing criticism.

Mr Buxton's reaction to questions on his role and the roles of other senior managers at Barclays was dismissive. He said that there would be no board changes resulting from the figures, though he repeated promises made at Continued on page 28, col 7

Rate cuts help housing market to recover

By GEORGE SIVELL, CITY EDITOR



Pidgley optimistic

THE housing market has been recovering for the past three months, thanks to steep interest rate cuts after the pound's exit from the European exchange-rate mechanism, a housebuilder and an estate agent said yesterday.

Berkeley Group, the Home Counties housebuilder, is asking shareholders for £44 million to fund "buying opportunities" created by the recession.

Hambro Countrywide, the estate agency and financial services group, said: "The signs are that following an unexpectedly active December, business is picking up." But Christopher Sporborg, Hambro Countrywide's chair-

man, added that although recent interest rate cuts had brought a welcome boost to confidence, "the recovery is fragile, and many challenges and uncertainties remain".

Harry Hill, joint managing director at Hambro Countrywide, added: "January was a good month, the best January for five years. February was a great month, the best month we have had since June 1988. March will be better, therefore we are in the lap of the gods."

Hambro Countrywide shares rose 3p to 49p. The final dividend will be paid on the new shares and the total for the year is forecast to rise from 5p to 6p.

Tony Pidgley, managing director, and the board said that, since December, "the housing market has shown some signs of recovery. Sales reservations have increased since the beginning of 1993 and, although these still need

to be converted into sales, they give the board grounds for some optimism for the future."

After the cash call, the group should end the year with net cash. Currently, it has net debts of £10 million on shareholders funds of £130 million to £140 million.

Hambro Countrywide, meanwhile, reported a pre-tax loss of £3.1 million for 1992 (£6.5 million loss). The 1992 loss per share was 0.95p (1.95p loss). A nominal 0.05p dividend was paid at the 1992 interim stage. Hambro added that, apart from this, no dividend would be recommended until "a sustained improvement can be foreseen".

These grim facts are worth recording, not merely as a corrective to any rosy views of Japan, but also because they give what is only an exaggerated picture of all the economies that have suffered banking excesses, especially in the English-speaking world and Scandinavia. In the same sense, yesterday's figures from Barclays Bank, no doubt, were too bad to be true — a Quinlan Memorial issue of the bad news — but still a valid warning. As long as the banks are rationing the bad news, they will be afraid to lend, and as long as they are afraid, more debts will turn bad.

Not until the bubble is truly burst can recovery begin. That is why still lower interest rates, even if they mean higher taxes, are the only way forward.

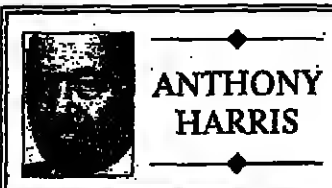
Problems of the half-deflated bubble

Wednesday's recovery celebrations in the London market look naive, to put it politely. Even a short backward perspective shows that this was a second celebration of the same event: share prices have been discounting recovery since the first shock of White Wednesday. OK, some recovery is now visible; but as *Tempus* remarked yesterday, it is easy to exaggerate its strength. The current news — of trouble at Ford and falls in employment or real wages all over the place — remains forbidding. We are likely to find that, as in America, the first bounce in activity from disastrously low levels has little early follow-through; it simply restores low levels.

The broader geographical view shows the Anglo-American recovery, such as it is, looking sadly lonely in the developed world. The up-trend is quite long established in America, but the employment outlook still shows no response, as Robert Reich

announced for the new administration this week. Consumer confidence has relapsed and bonds are still making much of the running on Wall Street. In continental Europe, psychological depression is gnawing at the business world like a rodent. Japanese businessmen maintain a more stoical public face when confronted with misfortune, so they announce their grim expectations of falling sales and profits quite calmly; but if they expressed their emotions like normal people, they would be screaming.

You would not know this if you relied on Japanese official forecasts, but the finance ministry in Tokyo makes even our own Treasury look prescient. It took the MoF many vital months to wake up to the existence of a growth problem; now they are addressing it with inadequate tax and spending measures, accompanied by more unrealistic forecasts. They rely on the enhanced fiscal package now at least nearing



ANTHONY HARRIS

enactment to restore growth. After all, they argue, a more modest stimulus in 1987 not only worked, but started the bubble economy. They ignore 1976-7, when a series of no fewer than five fiscal packages had hardly any effect. It is true that monetary policy was tight in the mid-1970s in an effort to contain the oil shock to prices, but it is not true that policy is loose now. There is still a monetary squeeze, despite official relaxation, but this time it is imposed by the commercial banks.

At first sight, this is simply the same mistake that the Bank of England made (in its public comments, at least) until quite recently,

but, in fact, the Japanese mistake is bigger, and there is less excuse for it. It is bigger because although Japanese officials talk of the bubble economy in the past tense, figures in the current GT Asian Monetary Monitor show that it is not burst, only half deflated. The MoF should know, because it is helping to conceal these facts in the course of bail-outs.

Fact 1: land prices, even after a steep fall, are still about 50 per cent above their long-term trend. Fact 2: virtually the whole of bank lending in the past two years has been to the property industry — not because it is credit-worthy, but because it cannot afford even the interest on its loans. As long as the banks keep the loans alive, they can avoid taking the underlying losses onto their books. Fact 3: although the inventory problem is said to be solved, business inventories are still far higher than is needed to service

even the optimistic official forecast of sales growth. It will probably be a full year before output responds to any upturn in demand. Meanwhile, it will be held below sales.

These grim facts are worth recording, not merely as a corrective to any rosy views of Japan, but also because they give what is only an exaggerated picture of all the economies that have suffered banking excesses, especially in the English-speaking world and Scandinavia. In the same sense, yesterday's figures from Barclays Bank, no doubt, were too bad to be true — a Quinlan Memorial issue of the bad news — but still a valid warning. As long as the banks are rationing the bad news, they will be afraid to lend, and as long as they are afraid, more debts will turn bad.

Not until the bubble is truly burst can recovery begin. That is why still lower interest rates, even if they mean higher taxes, are the only way forward.

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Philips set to axe up to 15,000 jobs

FROM MARK FULLER
IN EINDHOVEN

PHILIPS Electronics is to embark on its second significant reorganisation in as many years, shedding between 10,000 and 15,000 jobs in a bid to return to profit. Announcing losses of 900 million guilders (£336 million) last year, the Dutch electronics group, which made a restated £1878 million net profit the previous year, also unveiled the £11.2 billion restructuring package to counter the effects of the economic downturn and the continual malaise in its consumer electronics and components markets.

Dudley Eustace, the former British Aerospace executive, has been appointed financial director and vice-president to try to improve Philips' precarious financial position.

Jan Timmer, the president, said the company had underestimated the scale of price erosion, "the worst since the second world war" when it launched the £14.6 billion reorganisation in 1991.

Operation Centurion, as it was known, was one of the

■ Philips has brought in a new finance director as it struggles to reorganise for the second time in the face of the severest price competition for electronics since the war

most drastic job-cutting programmes ever seen in European industry, shedding nearly 50,000 jobs. The latest outbacks will be spread across "many countries and many projects", he said. He ruled out any large-scale sell-offs but said the company would continue to divest divisions that did not meet profit targets.

Prices fell 6 per cent on average for Philips consumer electronics last year and were not expected to improve this year, Mr Timmer said.

Operating profit fell 21 per cent to £12.49 billion last year, excluding the £11.2 billion provision for reorganisation. Mr Timmer said this was mainly due to losses at Grundig, the German subsidiary, which were consolidated into the parent company's figures for the first time last year. There were also a number of "large setbacks" in the

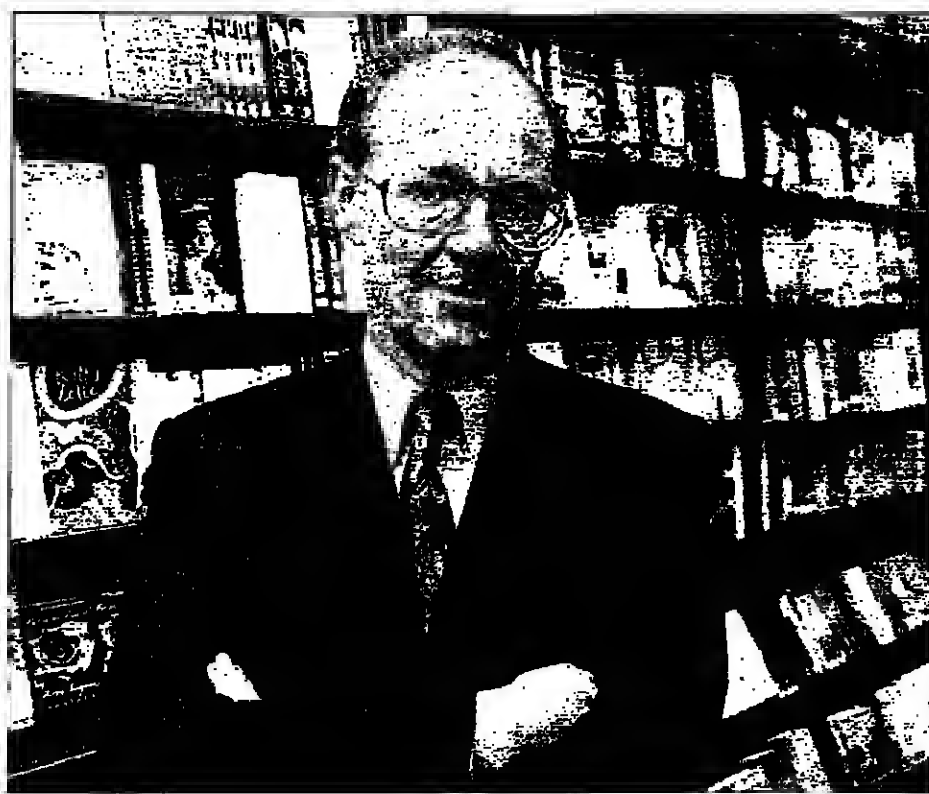
consumer electronics, components and communications systems markets. Geographically, Europe is hardest hit while US operations showed a slight improvement.

Philips will not pay a dividend for the third successive year. Shareholders' confidence has slumped since the group's fortunes turned sour in 1990.

Mr Timmer declined to make a profit forecast for this year. He said he expected the first benefits to accrue from the extra reorganisation in 1994.

Philips' fortunes are now tied to its new products, which still have a long way to go. The digital compact cassette and compact disc interactive have just been launched, but the high-definition television programme in Europe has been suspended.

Tempus, page 27



On the market: Terry Maher, above, head of Pentos, the books-to-stationery group, has put the loss-making office furniture division up for sale after a grim year in which group profits tumbled from £15.2 million to £4 million (Jon Asworth writes). Pentos, which owns Dillons, Ryman and Athena, hopes to raise at least £23 million from the sale of the division which made an operating loss of £300,000, compared with a profit of £3.7 million last time. Clive Gregory, finance director, said the proceeds would be used to reduce borrowings which

doubled from £20 million to £44 million in the year to end-December. The rise was fueled by capital expenditure of £16 million on opening new shops and £6 million towards the acquisition of Wilding, the office equipment chain. Profits were hit by exceptional redundancy and reorganisation costs of £3.5 million. Earnings per share were 2.6p compared with 9.1p. A final dividend of 0.8p (1.9p) makes a total of 1.5p (2.75p) a share for the year. Pentos shares were little changed at 51p yesterday.

Receivers called in at Survival Group

JOHN Ashcroft, former chairman and chief executive of Coloroll, the failed home furnishings group, has called in the receivers at Survival Group, his latest venture. Mr Ashcroft set up Survival in Penrith, Cumbria. The chain of outdoor clothing and equipment shops has liabilities estimated at £1.7 million. All 11 shops, stretching from Bristol to Glasgow, have been closed for stocktaking but should be open again this weekend.

Joint administrative receivers from Buchler Phillips & Traynor and Clark & Co, accountants, were assessing how best to salvage the business, which employs about 70 people. It was Mr Ashcroft's first new business venture after Coloroll went into receivership with debts of up to £400 million in June 1990. Ron Robinson, joint administrator, said: "We are looking to sell the company, either in whole or in part."

Health clubs join SE

DAVID Lloyd Leisure, owner and operator of seven health clubs in London and the South East, is coming to market via a placing and offer for sale at 150p a share, valuing it at £5.9 million. The directors forecast pre-tax profits of at least £5.5 million in the year to end-September, for potential earnings of 10.3p a share. Pre-tax profits rose from £625,000 in 1990 to £3 million last year. The issue price puts the company on a multiple of 14.5 times forecast earnings and reflects a forecast gross dividend yield of 2.9 per cent. Dealings will start on March 19. Tempus, page 27

News Corp issue

THE News Corporation, the international media group that owns The Times, is planning to raise \$450 million to \$500 million in convertible loan notes as the latest step in its strategy to cut bank debt. The 20-year liquid yield option notes are expected to be exchangeable for ordinary News Corp shares at about 20 per cent above the shares' market value on the date of issue. Merrill Lynch will act as placement agent and the securities will be issued via an exempt offering and private placement. News Corp has raised about \$3 billion in debt and equity issues in recent months.

VW warns of decline

THE German car industry is facing its sharpest decline since the second world war and the troubles are likely to continue well into next year. Ferdinand Piëch, new management board chairman at Volkswagen, Europe's biggest car maker, told trade union representatives yesterday. Herr Piëch predicted that new vehicle registrations would drop about 20 per cent this year, investment would have to be halved and jobs cut. Group net profits in the third quarter last year were DM104 million, a fall of almost 50 per cent year-on-year.

Amic pegs dividend

ANGLO American Industrial Corporation (Amic) is holding its 1992 total dividend at 350 cents a share, but says net attributable earnings fell by 12 per cent, to R352 million (£77.6 million) from R401 million. The year was one of stresses and strains in the South African economy: real GDP fell by 2 per cent, the third successive year of decline. Amic is a one-third shareholder in the R3.5 billion Columbus stainless steel project, which comes on stream in 1996. The company expects 1993 group earnings to be at least equal to those of 1992.

German steel strike

FACED with a drastic capacity reduction in the German steel industry, 24,000 workers at Krupp-Hoesch began an unofficial strike. Gerhard Cromme, the company's chairman, told strikers that redundancy, rather than early retirement and natural wastage, could not be ruled out. Thyssen Stahl, the country's biggest steel firm, approved 4,500 job cuts as part of a restructuring plan. February unemployment figures, out today, are expected to show the seasonally adjusted number of jobless in western Germany rising by close to January's 70,000 increase.

Sema rises 39%

SEMA, the Anglo-French computer services group, lifted pre-tax profits 39 per cent to £19.5 million (£14 million) in the year to end-December, on turnover of £417 million (£369 million). Earnings per share increased 20 per cent to 13.2p (11.1p). A final dividend of 1.7p (1.6p) a share makes a total of 2.8p (2.6p) a share for the year. The shares rose 12p to 283p. The results exclude a net capital gain of £15.4 million from the sale of Sofres, the group's market research company, in January 1992. The group has eliminated all net debt.

BP reviews Sullom Voe

BRITISH Petroleum, operator of the Sullom Voe terminal on the Shetland Islands, is reviewing operations, including staffing levels, in a bid to reduce costs. Some installations have become redundant now the main fields feeding into it, Brent and Ninian, are past their prime. Peter Guy, a BP spokesman, said Sullom Voe no longer made full use of installations built in the 1970s. Only four of five gas turbines used in the power stations are in use, and only three of four jetties. One fractionation unit out of the original three is in use.

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OPPORTUNITIES IN HONG KONG

I. TRADE HISTORY AND RECENT ECONOMIC POLICES IN CHINA Date: 15/3/93, 9.30am-12.30pm

II. CHINA MARKETS: HOW TO CAPTURE THEM AND WHERE TO GO Date: 16/3/93, 2.00pm-5.00pm

III. CHINA RAW MATERIALS AND MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES Date: 16/3/93, 9.30am-12.30pm

IV. COMMERCIAL LAWS AND INVESTMENTS IN CHINA Date: 16/3/93, 2.00pm-5.00pm

V. MONETARY AND BANKING SYSTEMS IN CHINA Date: 17/3/93, 2.00pm-5.00pm

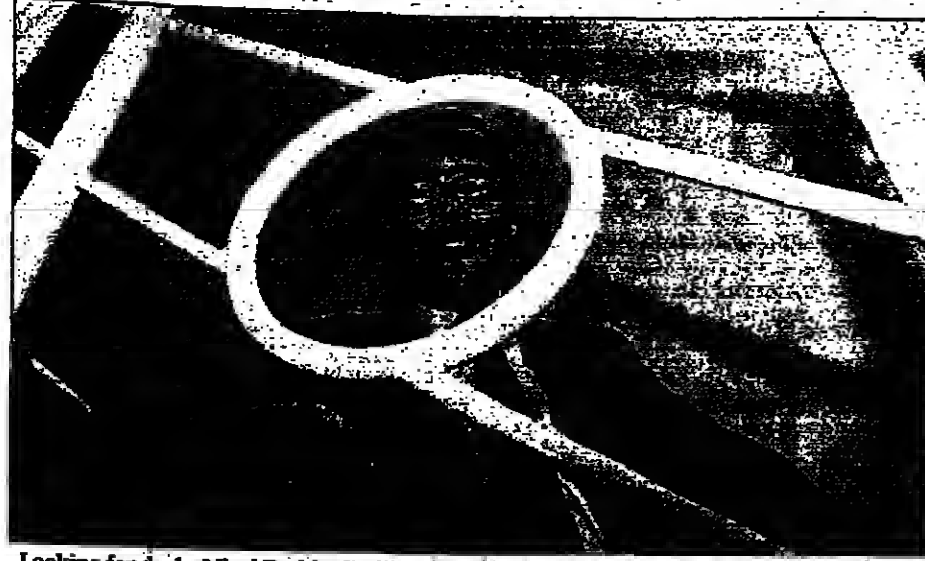
VI. SOCIAL AND LEGAL SYSTEMS IN CHINA Date: 18/3/93, 2.00pm-5.00pm

VII. CHINESE AND BRITISH CULTURAL DIFFERENCES Date: 18/3/93, 9.30am-12.30pm

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Looking for deals: Nigel Rudd, of Williams, which is paying £41m for extinguisher business

Williams hits the acquisition trail again

By COLIN CAMPBELL

WILLIAMS Holdings, the industrial group that has spent £65 million on acquisitions in the past 17 months, is buying Thorn EMI's portable fire extinguisher business for £41 million.

Williams is paying for the purchase with the proceeds of an 11.9 million share placing at 345p a share that was completed yesterday. It said that the acquisition would broaden its fire and safety division.

Thorn's extinguisher business has manufacturing bases in Oldham and Newcastle upon Tyne and distributes and services its products through 28 branches in Britain and two branches in Rotterdam and Antwerp. The division has 1,000 employees. Sales

for the year ending March 31 are forecast at £38.1 million, and pre-interest profit for the 1993 financial period is forecast at £3.3 million. Net assets on completion are expected to be £10.1 million, debt free, and the pro-forma gearing ratio of Williams will be 43 per cent.

Thorn EMI has agreed to the continued use of the Thorn brand on fire appliances under specified conditions. Nigel Rudd, chairman of Williams, said yesterday that the group had performed strongly in difficult conditions in the year ended December 31, when pre-tax profits rose from £133.2 million to £161.3 million on turnover of £1.04 billion (£1 billion). The final dividend rises from 7.35p to 7.5p a share, making

12.5p (12.35p) a share for the year. The 1992 profits of Williams, drawn up under the new financial reporting standard, includes a £5 million loss on the disposal of Spencer Clark Metal Industries and an £11 million book profit on the sale of the group's 9.95 per cent interest in Rascal Electronics, for which it made an unsuccessful bid in November, 1991.

Mr Rudd said 1992 was a year of considerable challenge to the group's operating companies. In Britain, mainland Europe and North America, all markets fell victim to the deepening recession. With lower interest rates and falling inflation, there were some early signals that the economy was improving. But in

mainland Europe, the position remained fragile.

"Overall, however, the outlook for Williams is more encouraging than it has been for some time," Mr Rudd added, although he suggested that any recovery in the American or British economy was not expected to have any material impact until the latter part of 1993.

Sir Colin Southgate, Thorn EMI's chairman, said the proceeds would be used for the further growth of the group's music and rental businesses, and, in the short term, to reduce group borrowings. Shares in Williams eased 5p to 355p. Thorn EMI shares were unchanged at 871p.

Tempus, page 27

Property write-offs drag down Ladbroke profit

By MARTIN WALLER
DEPUTY CITY EDITOR

SWINGING write-offs in the value of investment property cut 1992 pre-tax profits at Ladbroke Group, Cyril Stein's hotels, DIY and gaming combine, to £40.1 million, from £210.4 million in 1991. Property provisions totalled £146.7 million; to date, the group has written £336.2 million off the value of its portfolio.

Adoption of the new FRS3 accounting convention, which bars profits from disposals being taken into the pre-tax line and will be used in Ladbroke's 1993 accounts, would have reduced the 1992 profit figure to just £5.2 million.

But Mr Stein, the chairman, is pushing ahead with a final dividend of 6.23p, making a total up from 10.93p to 11.15p. The £121 million cost of the dividend will come out of the group's revenue reserves of £508 million.

"For 27 years as a public company," Mr Stein said, "we've never lowered our dividend once. There was no

■ The absence of Americans from hotels in Britain and racetracks back home is holding back Ladbroke, while property losses have deepened and do-it-yourself has slipped

reason to do so now." He cited the size of the reserves and the company's £53.8 million of positive cash flow last year, against an outflow in 1991 of £87.0 million. Ladbroke expects to be cash-positive again this year.

The size of the property provisions dismayed the City, but the support of the increased dividend limited the share price fall in 1p, to 199p. Mark Finnie, analyst at NatWest Securities, has revised his 1993 pre-tax profit forecast to £163 million, from £172 million.

At the year-end, net borrowings stood at £1.34 billion, an increase from £1.21 billion. Much of the debt is overseas, and the fall in the value of the pound increased the sterling equivalent by £195.5 million. Mr Stein said the group had more than £400 million of

undrawn bank facilities.

Hilton International, the hotel chain, saw profits before exceptional items slip from £163.8 million to £151.7 million, despite an £11 million benefit from exchange rate movements. The stronger dollar and yen came too late in the year to influence overseas travel by Americans and Japanese.

Mr Stein said there was no sign of Americans returning to London in large numbers, but bookings both in Britain and worldwide were substantially higher than this time last year. Hilton sold four hotels in 1992, realising profits of £38.9 million.

Racing saw a minimal £300,000 increase in profits, to £64.8 million. In Britain, the number of betting transactions was up after a fall in 1991 and net margins were

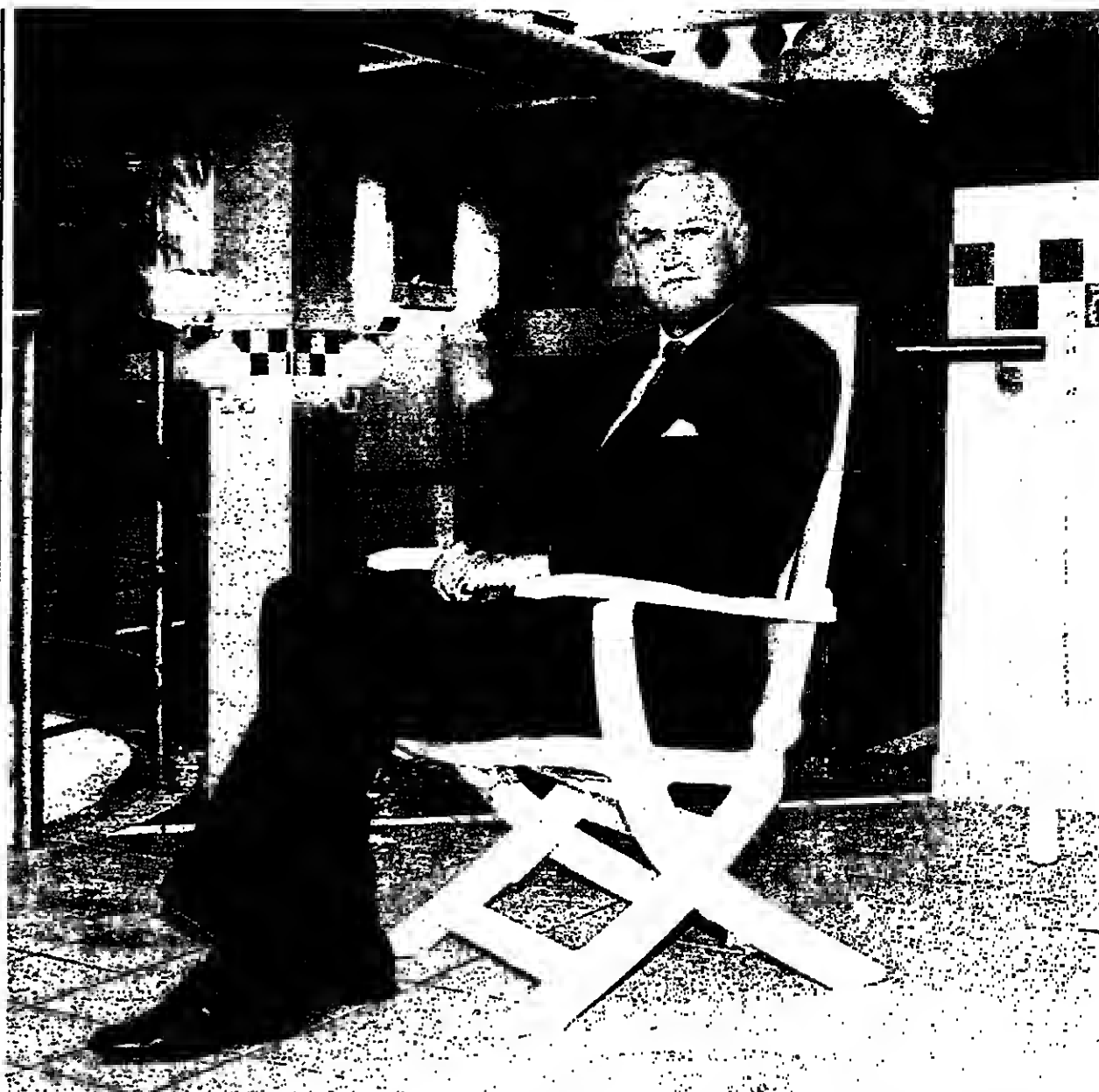
good. In America, however, turnover and profits were static, after losses at the racetrack in Minnesota, now closed. Sixty shops were shut in Florida after an increase in betting tax imposed by the regional government. Closures cut £8 million off the division's profits.

The property side saw losses deepen by £23 million, to £35.4 million. The write-down in the value of the portfolio resulted from a professional valuation of a quarter of the group's investment properties: there was a provision amounting to 15.2 per cent of the portfolio's value.

Texas Homecare had a difficult second half, and profits for the year fell from £47.5 million to £43.8 million. Sales were up by 6.2 per cent overall and by more than 4 per cent on a like-for-like basis.

Mr Stein said any improvement in trading in 1993, and continuing operating efficiencies in all divisions, would enable Ladbroke to improve profitability.

Tempus, page 27



Sinking pints, rising profits: Boddington Group, the North West pub operator, bucked a 4.4 per cent decline in beer volumes across the group in the 53 weeks to January 2, to increase pre-tax profits by £6 million to £26.3 million, ahead of market expectations and sparking a 14p share price rise to 230p. A final dividend of 4.7p makes a total increase from 6.6p to 7.3p.

Boddington, where Hubert Reid, above, is managing director, retains a near-20 per cent strategic stake in J.A. Devenish, the West Country pubs group, but higher dividend payments and lower interest rates have reduced the carrying cost of this investment to less than £300,000 a year. The current year had got off to an encouraging start, he said, and the group's plans did not depend on an economic recovery.

Lautro fines Colonial Mutual

By LINDSAY COOK, MONEY EDITOR

COLONIAL Mutual, the Australian insurance company, has been fined £130,000 by the Life Assurance and Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation for breaches of regulations over more than a year. It is the largest fine Lautro has imposed.

The company is examining all policies sold in the course of several years to establish whether they were suitable for customers. Thirty customers are to receive compensation to put them back where they would have been if they had not bought Colonial Mutual policies.

Lautro's previous largest fine, of £120,000, was imposed on Scottish Widows in December. The company also had to check thousands of

policies and pay compensation to some customers.

Colonial Mutual admitted misconduct, in that it had failed to organise and control its internal affairs in a responsible manner. It had failed to train staff adequately or to check that they were keeping proper records.

The company had been warned in the spring of 1990 to improve its procedures but, when checked in the summer of 1991, it was found to have failed to deal with many of the problems that had been identified.

The sales staff did not observe compliance procedures adequately. The company did not take references from all its tied agents or train its staff and agents properly. It

did not check records completed by salesmen to ensure that policies sold had been suitable for customers. Neither did it handle complaints properly.

At the end of 1991, the company had suspended recruitment of tied agents for three months at Lautro's request. In addition, existing appointments had been reviewed.

The regulator said Colonial Mutual had since improved its recruitment and compliance procedures.

Although the fine reflected the seriousness of the breaches, Lautro said, it was the first time a charge of misconduct had been brought against Colonial Mutual. The company had co-operated with the investigators.

New Ofwat terms take effect

Ofwat, the water industry watchdog, said amendments to industry licences prohibiting any cross-subsidy between the 32 water companies' water and sewerage businesses took effect from yesterday.

The amendments, agreed with the companies, also enable Ofwat to assess transactions within water companies by requiring the disclosure of individual transactions over a certain amount with associated companies.

Other amendments require the water companies' directors to notify Ofwat of proposals for diversification that might affect their business.

Greencore sale

The sharp rise in the share price of Greencore this week has scuppered plans by the Irish government to sell its 30.4 per cent stake in the sugar business. Talks with Archer-Daniels-Midland centered on the 240p share price prevailing in mid-February. The shares leapt from 239p to 269p in three days but eased 5p to 264p yesterday when Dublin made clear it would limit any sale to a 29.9 per cent stake to avoid triggering a full bid from the buyer.

Lloyd's link

Lloyd's of London has called in McKinsey, the management consultancy, to co-ordinate the 350-year-old insurance market's first business plan. McKinsey was used to produce the task force report on the insurance market's problems and methods of resolving them.

SE to widen range of listing sponsors

By PHILIP PANGALOS

THE London Stock Exchange is considering allowing non-member firms, including advisers such as accountants and lawyers, to sponsor listings.

According to draft rules, due to take effect this summer, companies will be able to choose from a wider range of professional advisers to sponsor or list applications and a sponsor will no longer have to be a member firm. The proposals will be of particular interest to corporate brokers, merchant banks and other advisers.

The criteria for sponsors will include good commercial standing, the employment of an adequate supervision of staff with relevant qualifications and experience, and an undertaking not to act as sponsor for any organisation from which the firm is not independent.

Nigel Atkinson, head of

listings at the SE, said: "With Europe being a more open place than previously, we can not have restrictive practices. We hope to open up the position and are looking at who could sensibly be a sponsor."

"As firms have expanded the range of their professional capability in recent years, we recognised that it was not only member firms which were able to perform the responsibilities of the sponsor. Listed companies will now be able to choose from a larger pool of potential sponsors," he added.

With proposals to scrap the Unlisted Securities Market, which has been used by small companies as a stepping stone to a full listing, there are concerns about companies' ability to raise capital. Many smaller companies will therefore welcome any possibility of obtaining a listing at a more reasonable cost.

Brian Winterlood of Winterlood Securities said: "We welcome such an opening-up of the market. We think it's slightly as long as it's well regulated, I'm not against it. I think it will give us a wider spread. We need a wider spread. It brings in another element of competitiveness."

The question of whether more competition will actually bring reduced costs is open. It is estimated that about 95 per cent of the work will still be done by the firms undertaking this type of work at present.

"I'm not envisaging an enormous rush of new applicants. We are making sure there is a quality threshold for all the potential sponsors," the SE added.

N&P debt provisions hit profit

By OUR MONEY EDITOR

THE National & Provincial Building Society made provisions for bad debts of £109 million last year, cutting pre-tax profits by 22 per cent to £80 million.

Richard Newton, the chairman, said last year saw the crisis in the housing market deepen and the fears inherent in a year ago all too fully realised. Mr Newton said: "During a very difficult year, however, the society has not only maintained its financial health, but improved it."

Operating profits increased 22 per cent to £189 million. This was despite taking into account a £7.2 million increase in the level of non-recoverable interest.

The cost-income ratio has been brought down by 23 per cent since 1990 to 40.9 per cent. Total assets at the seventh-largest building society increased by 11.6 per cent to £12 billion.

The Skipton Building Society also saw an increase in provisions and a fall in profits. Provisions rose from £27.5 million to £42.2 million, with a half relating to commercial loans.

The pre-tax profit halved from £8.2 million to £4.1 million. The society also restated the 1991 accounts to increase provisions by £3.2 million and reduce commercial assets by the same amount. This also cut the profit after tax by £2.2 million. The society's assets grew to £3 billion and its cost income ratio fell from 50.1 per cent to 42.8 per cent.

EC takes hard line on Rover sweeteners

FROM TOM WALKER
IN BRUSSELS

THE European Commission will next week ask the British government to renege up to £70 million from British Aerospace in respect of sweeteners paid five years ago when the aircraft maker took over the ailing Rover car group.

The judgment, the first real test of competition commissioner Karel van Miert's mettle, is likely to draw strong protests from BAE. But the commission was unrelenting yesterday. One official said there was no question over the decision: "It only took us about ten minutes to decide," he said.

The Rover sweeteners affair is one of the longest-running Brussels sagas. Sir Leon Brittan, then competition commissioner, had asked BAE to repay the £44.4 million it received from the government in 1988 after an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the £150 million sale in 1987. BAE lawyers

however, argued that Sir Leon had overstepped his powers, and the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg annulled the decision. Sir Leon, furious that a simple procedural oversight by his own legal team could result in such a dramatic reversal, vowed to re-open the investigation and have the money repaid.

Next week's announcement will be the final stage of that fresh enquiry. The ruling will fuel BAE fears that Brussels is conducting something of a vendetta against the hard-pressed group. The EC this year criticised the pricing policy of Rover Group, hinting it could end up in court for refusing discounts to private buyers.

Based on a sales period between August 1989 and spring 1990, EC officials calculated that Rover could owe as much as £65 million to customers. The case embarrassed the EC at the time, as it wanted as little publicity as possible before the sweeteners judgment.

Mr Van Miert will ask the company to

repay anything up to £70 million because the EC believes interest should be paid on the original £44.4 million. An interest rate of 10 per cent a year from the date of repayment would add £37 million to BAE's bill. The exact calculation of interest owed, however, has to be made by a British court.

The EC has always been critical of the role played by Lord Young, former trade secretary, in the Rover case, alleging he colluded with the company in hiding facts from Brussels.

The sweeteners were uncovered by Whitehall's financial watchdog, John Bourn, comptroller and auditor general. They comprised £9.5 million covering the purchase cost of minority shares; £33.4 million which accrued to BAE from deferred payment; and £1.5 million for legal and other costs during the takeover.

Mr Van Miert's decision will be welcomed by the French, who often claimed to detect signs of bias in competition policy under Sir Leon.

NEW INVESTMENT RATES FROM THE BRISTOL & WEST

Effective 5th March 1993.

ACCOUNT	AMOUNT INVESTED	GROSS* (VARIABLE)	NETT**
BALMORAL HIGH INTEREST ACCOUNT	£2,000 - £9,999	6.50%	4.88%
	£10,000 - £24,999	6.75%	5.06%
	£25,000 - £49,999	7.00%	5.25%
	£50,000+	7.25%	5.44%

Effective 5th March 1993.

ACCOUNT	AMOUNT INVESTED	GROSS* (VARIABLE)	GROSS* CAR†	NETT**	NETT** CAR†
BALMORAL MONTHLY INCOME ACCOUNT	£2,000 - £9,999	6.31%	6.50%	4.74%	4.84%
	£10,000 - £24,999	6.55%	6.75%	4.91%	5.02%
	£25,000 - £49,999	6.78%	7.00%	5.09%	5.21%
	£50,000+	7.02%	7.25%	5.26%	5.39%

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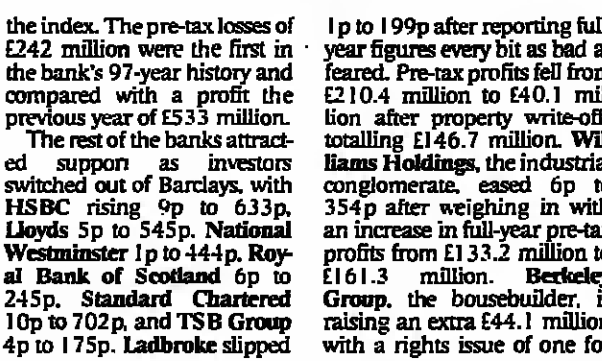
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STOCK MARKET

In spite of this, the FT-SE 100 index held above the 2,900 level, limiting the fall on the day to 13.8 points at 2,904.8, with 660 million shares traded. The decision to halve the final dividend and the losses far worse than the City had been expecting saw shares of Barclays Bank touch 344p before they ended the session 37p lower at 396p. The Barclay share price accounted for almost four points of the fall in



cent of the shares.
 □ New York — Shares were down in afternoon trading but analysts said they saw the drop as a correction. The Dow Jones industrial average was down 12.96 points at 3,391.08.

100%	86%	Treas 0% 1995-99	100%
137%	123%	Treas 15% 1999	137%
122%	107%	Each 12% 1998	122%
112%	97%	Treas 9% 1999	111%
124%	109%	Each 12% 1999	124%
116%	101%	Treas 10% 1999	116%
118%	103%	Corp. 10% 1999	118%
110%	94%	Conv 9% 2000	110%
120%	114%	Treas 13% 2000	120%
114%	99%	Treas 10% 2001	114%
129%	115%	Treas 14% 1998-01	128%
113%	98%	Treas 9% 2002	113%
52%	46%	Treas 9pc 2001	52%
115%	100%	Treas 10% 2003	115%

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FALLS:	
Barclays	392p (-41p)
Allied-Lyons	582p (-11p)
Hardy Hanson	246p (-11p)
SA Breweries	820p (-28p)
Transfer Tech	456p (-13p)
Harrington K	225p (-11p)

Closing Prices Page 29

ISSUES	
Kingfisher Uts n/p (450)	78-14
Menvien-Swain n/p (520)	67 ...
PizzaExpress n/p (40)	38 +1
Stonehill Hldg A n/p (10)	34 ...
Trafalgar House n/p (60)	17 -1
Triplex Lloyd n/p (140)	29 ...
Volex n/p (345)	53 ...
Wills Group n/p (16)	57 ...
Yorkshire Chem n/p (330)	42 ...

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Paris put on standby for a new French revolution

Harsh economic realities are forcing France to man the international trade barricades and step up privatisation, Ross Tienan says

A new industrial revolution is looming across the Channel. Behind much of the rhetoric pressaging elections to the French National Assembly this month lies discomfort over acknowledging a huge structural shift in the French economy.

Public ownership is on the way out. Privatisation is back on the agenda. This is no mere matter of political philosophy: it is an economic imperative, born from the conjunction of France's growing budget deficit with the need to adjust the country's industrial base to the demands of the single market and world trade.

Given the degree of governmental entanglement in industry, and the pain of developing recession, it is not surprising French ministers have hit out at Britain. But behind the allegations of "social dumping" and "competitive devaluation" lies the uncomfortable truth that France, too, must go some way down the route travelled by Britain in the 1980s. It is a path that Spain and Italy are also taking. Like France, they must tackle rising deficits by selling state industrial holdings. Like France, they must free their industry to raise money on capital markets, form alliances, and make the strategic shift from serving national customers to competing, or falling, in a single European marketplace that is far tougher than envisaged.

In the past, state interference often seemed to serve France well. The French economy stagnated for virtually the first half of this century. But in the 30 years from 1945, successive governments, through the system of indicative planning, were able to claim the credit for modernising the French economy, achieving growth in gross domestic product averaging 5 per cent a year.

Peter Holmes, an economist, said: "The problem is that while this job had been accomplished by the 1960s, government continued to lead people to believe that it had a bigger role to play in directing industry than it was actually capable of playing any more, right up to the early 1980s."

When the first oil shock derailed the world economy in 1973, France suffered with the rest. Industry reacted to slower growth and increased competition within the European Community by state-sponsored domestic alliances that concentrated market share.

State ownership of key industries has long been a French tradition. The response of François Mitterrand's newly elected Socialist government to on-going malaise and the recession of the early 1980s was, therefore, to seek salvation in a programme of nationalisation. Many key companies, such as Renault, the vehicle maker, had been in government hands since the war. The Socialists' 1982 nationalisation campaign brought firms accounting for 15 per cent of industrial output and virtually the entire banking system into



Nurturer of nationalisation: Mitterrand saw it as salvation

public ownership. Within a year, it all started to go wrong. Under pressure, from overstretched finances, the Socialists' "order-of-all-state" companies to become profitable by 1985. Conservative success in the 1986 National Assembly elections ushered in a period of "cohabitation" with Mitterrand's Socialist presidency and a law to return business to private hands. Under an act of 1986, valid for five years, 32 of 65 named companies have been wholly or partly sold. Even after the Socialists regained full power, privatisation continued at a modest pace with the sale, as recently as January, of a further tranche of shares in Rhône-Poulenc, the chemicals group.

The Union Pour la France, the conservative alliance set to take control of the assembly this month, is committed to relaunching the privatisation programme. The UPF also looks set to push it firmly into the utility sector for the first time. *Le Monde*, the indepen-

dent French newspaper, said: "A major earthquake is in the offing: a medium-term shift in the centre of gravity of French capitalism." It is clear that some conservative leaders are contemplating a much bigger sell-off programme than had been thought.

Philippe Auberger, a spokesman within the UPF, said the financial goal was to achieve privatisation receipts of Fr30 billion (£3.7 billion) this year, with subsequent targets of Fr30 billion to Fr50 billion a year. Others have indicated that annual receipts could reach Fr60 billion. That suggests a self-off programme comparable in scale to Britain's, which raised £8.7 billion in 1988-9, the peak year.

A special commission is to decide the detail of disposals, choosing the companies, timing, and price. The commission will be responsible for ensuring that 25 to 30 per cent of shares in

privatised firms go to committed shareholders who will form a "noyau dur," a hard core that will preserve the company's stability and discourage unwelcome takeover bids.

Even so, about 25 per cent of the capital is likely to be offered for sale on international markets. Conservative politicians have suggested that the capacity of the French stock market, far smaller than the London exchange, might limit the pace of the sale programme. In fact, French investors have displayed an astonishing appetite for shares in state companies.

In practice, many state-controlled French companies have operated as though privately owned for some years now. But their balance sheets have often become overstretched because of the inability of the state to inject new capital. Today's high interest rates have made these debts a heavy burden, adding to the enthusiasm of directors disenchanted with government control for escaping into the private sector.

Prime targets for piecemeal privatisation seem to be Rhône-Poulenc, Pechiney, the aluminium smelter, and Elf Aquitaine, the oil company, plus banks and insurance companies. Usinor Sacilor, the steelmaker, and Renault, which already has a 20 per cent cross-shareholding with Volvo of Sweden, will probably be added when market conditions permit. But attention is also focusing on the hitherto taboo area of utilities. First candidate in the frame is France Telecom, with a price tag of perhaps Fr200 billion.

Both conservatives and Socialists are already jockeying for position in the presidential election in 1995. So, to placate those who might otherwise oppose privatisation, the receipts will be applied to the construction of public housing and rebuilding the companies' balance sheets as well as repayment of the public debt.

Politicians doubtless hope that, thanks to the long-standing practice of *pantouflage*, moving civil servants between industry and ministries, and the concept of the *noyau dur*, the state will retain much of its influence on the activities of firms.

Voters' expectations about the ability of government to direct industry have yet to take account of the single market and the power of the European Commission to block subsidies, import tariffs and other forms of market-rigging. If British experience is any guide, both groups are likely to experience frustration over their ability, post-privatisation, to block private sector decisions involving rationalisations and job losses.

The international development of French industry, necessary if it is to compete in a world dividing rapidly into three huge trading blocks, has been held back by state ownership. But state involvement has also led to a good deal of restructuring, much of it beneficial, and investment. In a year or two, with the burdens of under-capitalisation and penal interest rates lifted, French industry may be expected to out-perform. So long as that restores the creation of jobs and prosperity, French privatisation will help to establish a new European consensus in which the private sector rather than the state is dominant. Governments no longer have the money to invest in the infrastructure as they used to.

TEMPUS

Silence is not golden

INVESTORS have every reason to be furious with Barclays and its management. The bank blew the 1990 million proceeds of the 1988 rights in a cavalier spree of low-quality lending at the top of the property market. It failed to foresee the depth of the recession and therefore spent three years underproviding for bad debts. Now the market feels betrayed, because the bank failed to give any warning of a dividend cut.

Many institutions had accepted the bank's silence about its performance as a sign that the payout would be maintained. After all, Barclays had a perfect opportunity to make a dividend and profit warning along with December's provisions against 1991.

It would be nice to believe that the worst is over. Even Barclays could not lose £600 million on 27 customers for a second year in a row. The bank has also included every conceivable provision in its figures, including

the £690 million general provision, a £102 million reorganisation charge and an £82 million loss on disposals. Stripping much of this out, a £500 million profit looks attainable this year.

Unfortunately, Barclays still appears underprovided when compared with its peers. The bank has provisions of only 31 per cent against its £9.35 billion problem loan portfolio, against more than 50 per cent at National Westminster. In addition, 12 per cent of the group's assets are based in continental Europe, which could demand some further ugly provisioning.

The shares are also likely to flounder until the bank produces a credible chief executive. At 398p, the shares stand on a prospective yield of 5.1 per cent on a maintained dividend, 0.2 of a point lower than NatWest. That is scarcely an adequate reward for such an unappealing prospect.

Ladbroke

SINCE FR53 now prevents Ladbroke including profits from hotel disposals on a cost basis, how convenient that the group should write down its hotels by £196 million. That decision should ensure that profits from hotel sales begin to flow once more on a carrying-value basis.

Not that Ladbroke has escaped the new accounting regulations without any damage. Under the new standard, the group suffered a retained loss of £34 million last year, compared with a £1.2 million profit under the old system. The hotel and property writedowns have also knocked the group's debt ratios off course.

Net debts of £1.34 billion put the gearing at 53 per cent. If one excludes the £376 million value the group

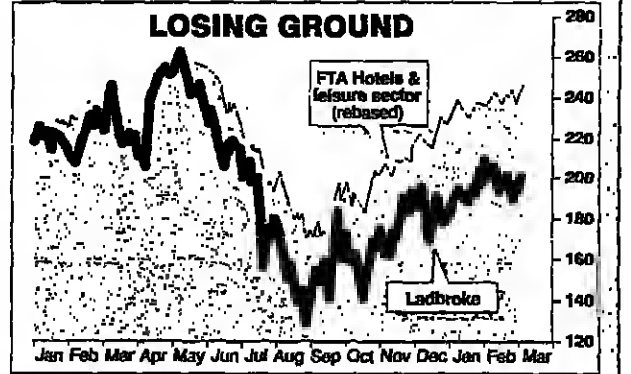
attributes to its Vernons and Hilton brands, the figure is nearer 62 per cent.

The group will continue to suffer a heavy interest charge this year since half its debt is fixed and some of the rest is swapped out at higher rates.

Ladbroke needs to sustain a strong cash flow to service this debt. To that end, the

group will need to realise another £100 million or so in property sales this year, not onerous given the group's trading record.

The shares however are stuck on a yield of 7.4 per cent, which shows the City is still concerned about Ladbroke's ability to pay down its borrowings.



Williams

WILLIAMS Holdings is one of the few acquisition-driven stars of the eighties still standing. A strategy of being the biggest and lowest-cost player in businesses with above-average growth provided the basis for creditable results, despite difficult trading conditions.

The group even achieved double-digit profit growth in markets such as building products. However, given these businesses' strong market position and high margins, one could have expected stronger cash generation.

The acquisition of Thorn's fire extinguisher business is a worthy candidate for the Williams treatment, with considerable scope for profit improvement. It also sends out pleasing signals on Williams' acquisition strategy, suggesting a preference for opportunistic, bolt-on deals, rather than large, hostile takeover bids.

Nigel Rudd was at pains to make it clear that future profits would be driven by both organic growth and acquisitions. Williams is

highly operationally geared for recovery. However, the share price is well up with events and probably needed a more bullish statement on trading prospects than Mr Rudd gave.

David Lloyd Leisure

NO ONE wants to miss out on the next Tadpole Technology, so the small crop of new issues is generating considerable interest. David Lloyd Leisure is unlikely to inherit the Tadpole mantle, but it is worth more than a cursory glance.

A prospective p/e of 14.5 and a 2.9 per cent yield make the issue look pricey for such a small company, although it is at a discount to the leisure sector. But growth prospects are good. The placing will raise £13.6 million for the company to finance the opening of six new clubs in the next three years. After that, the group should generate the cash for further expansion. The business is highly cash-generative: more than half of its income is derived

from membership fees, which are paid up to a year in advance. The shortage of new equity should ensure a premium of up to 20p on the 150p offer price when dealing starts.

Philips

PHILIPS'S 900 million guilders net loss, after almost 900 million guilders profit in 1991, is a reminder of the stressed state of consumer electronics. Yesterday's 6 per cent jump in the share price, to 22.50 guilders, was a technical bounce rather than a response to positive news from the sector's European flagship. The 47 guilders of April 1990 are a distant memory.

Yet, through the fog of a switch from current to historic cost accounting, and consolidation of Grundig, light can be discerned. Job cuts, which explain the 1.2 billion guilders charge, will enhance profits by about 750 million guilders a year. Wage-restraint, a stronger dollar and the hope that demand and prices cannot drop much further, could soon put Philips back in the black.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Press pack hounds Buxton

ANDREW Robert Fowell Buxton yesterday bore the haunted look of a scion staring extinction in the face when the hordes of the press swarmed at his heels with a ferocity as unprecedented throughout Barclays Bank's 97-year history as its £242 million loss. "Who is responsible? Haven't any heads rolled?" the normally restrained financial press pack bayed. "How can Barclays' branch managers have any credibility when they tell struggling small businesses to fire executives and employees?" they demanded. "Is it a chairman you can't find, or a chief executive?" another asked. Buxton, whose critics suspect he had almost as much to do with Barclays' decline as Sir John Quinlan, the outgoing chairman, fought his corner by nimbly dodging as many questions as possible. "I know the answer, but no, I'm not going to answer," he said repeatedly. Asked if he would "do the honorable thing and go", Buxton merely said: "No." Only when Buxton, a member of the family banking dynasty that merged to form Barclays in the late 19th century, said he had taken a "significant cut" in his chairman's salary, did the pack back off — and then only slightly. "You're not exercising the Birt option?" one stray interloper tried. Buxton looked confused, apparently unaware of the BBC director-general's unusual pay arrangements. "No, no he's not," Sir Peter Middleton, the deputy chairman and head of BZW, had to interject.

THE code wizards at Bletchley Park, who were always one step ahead of the Germans with Enigma, have nothing on British Airways. In its latest in-house newsletter, BA has revealed the codenames used in takeover negotiations. In the aborted deal with KLM, BA referred to the Dutch airline as "Operation Sahara". "Navigator" was the codename for Quantas, the Australian airline. In "Project Forest", BA called itself "Squirrel", referring to USAir as "Badger". One hesitates to break the code for Virgin.

Suited to City

AS BRITISH fashion designers extol the virtues of grunge and sloppily (but expensively) dressed men grace the London Fashion Week catwalks, City conservatism is still reeling from Lord King's costly sartorial miscalculation about Richard Branson. Just how trad or individualistic can one be in the City? Picaresquely threadbare in Threadneedle Street, or Burlington Bertie-like in Bow? One arbiter of

taste, John Morgan, associate editor of GQ magazine, says: "Someone with charisma and innate style like Branson can always defy the norm. The trend for '93 is that the corporate uniform is going to be less fixed, with continental styles such as blazers and flannels finding increasing favour over here." But the Institute of Directors felt it unfashionable to give any public advice on dress sense. The CBI says demurely: "Dress should be appropriate to the importance of one's job and practical in relation to one's workplace and type of business."

Water wall

A HUGE wall of flowing water, powered by 1,760 solar panels atop a massive steel and glass structure, might look a bit out of place in the London borough of Brent. Finding a site anywhere in Britain able to provide Britain's ambitious Expo '92 pavilion in Seville with enough sunlight to power its 70 by 25 metre waterfall in itself seems next to impossible. But these minor details did not deter the Asian Sky Satellite Company in Brent. It has paid the DTI only £1 million to acquire the pavilion, which cost £14 million to build. But Asian Sky, which needed new headquarters, must pay an extra £9 million to dismantle it and ship it back to London. Jonathan Balnes, deputy managing director of Healey and Baker in Seville, which handled the sale, says: "The DTI considered this to be the most attractive offer." Well, certainly the most incongruous.

MELINDA WITTSTOCK



BUSINESS LETTERS

Issues raised by devaluation

From Mr Patrick O'Brien
Sir, Anatole Kaletsky's article "The real value of devaluation" (March 4) raises some fundamental questions but does not answer them satisfactorily. If all countries devalued during a world recession then exchange rates would stay the same and also, I suspect, would interest rates.

With a gold standard, presumably the price of gold would rise. This, however, would lead to a fall in the amount of gold produced because poorer ores would then be exploited in existing mines. The owners of gold, however, might spend more and gold reserves allow an increase in credit, which might be deflationary.

However, the reduction of interest rates will reduce the spending power of those living on investments in building societies, etc. This is deflationary as we are now about to experience.

Surely Keynesian deficit spending is more appropriate in a country with an inadequate infrastructure?

The oft-mentioned decline in our manufacturing sector is because, uniquely among advanced economies, Britain is self-sufficient in oil, which raises our exchange rate rela-

tive to other advanced countries.

The fall in interest rates which has occurred reflects the reduction in the exchange risk for foreigners who finance our trade deficit by buying gilts, etc. The Governor of the Bank of England, for one, doubts whether this is sustainable especially if our trade deficit rises, which it will.

The frightening symptom is our balance of payments deficit at the bottom of a recession. Unlike other developed countries we do not have a trade deficit in oil as an explanation. It is not investment that is the cause of this deficit because that is too low. It is consumption that is not offset by production. Only government hand-outs can explain this phenomenon.

The boom that was partly fuelled by the inflation of house prices is over and the expenditure in excess of production it made possible has been replaced by the necessity to reduce borrowings. What other inflationary force is left? The deficit must now be structural and arises from spending on welfare.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK O'BRIEN,
2 Evening Glade,
Ferndown, Dorset.

Chancellor should address savings inequity

From Mr John Hart

Sir, In his letter of February 17, Trevor Openshaw suggested the reintroduction of a form of "granny bonds". In some measure to offset the serious loss of income of the 6 million or so people whose deposits with building societies provide the bulk of finance for mortgages. There would appear no good reason why the building societies should

not be authorised to issue such tax-free income bonds for outright purchase, or by transfers from existing deposits, up to defined maxima.

Let the Chancellor iron out this inequity in the Budget.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN HART,
Ashfield,
39 Outlands Chase,
Weybridge,
Surrey.

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BARCLAYS

BARCLAYS STOCKBROKERS LIMITED

Cost of banking on property

Barclays' commitment to lending during the building boom of the 1980s has rebounded in the 1990s, says Carl Mortished

NEARLY £1 billion of the £2.5 billion in bad debts announced by Barclays Bank is accounted for by the disastrous expansion of property and construction lending over the past five years.

About 40 per cent of the £1.96 billion UK provisions, a "significant proportion" of the £145 million European provisions and the bulk of £183 million write-offs were property related.

The property boom of the late 1980s was backed by more than £40 billion of bank debt and Barclays, of all the clearing banks, was the heaviest lender. At the peak of the borrowing frenzy, Barclays had £5.4 billion out to the property sector, not including construction loans, compared with £1.9 billion for Midland and £2.8 billion for NatWest.

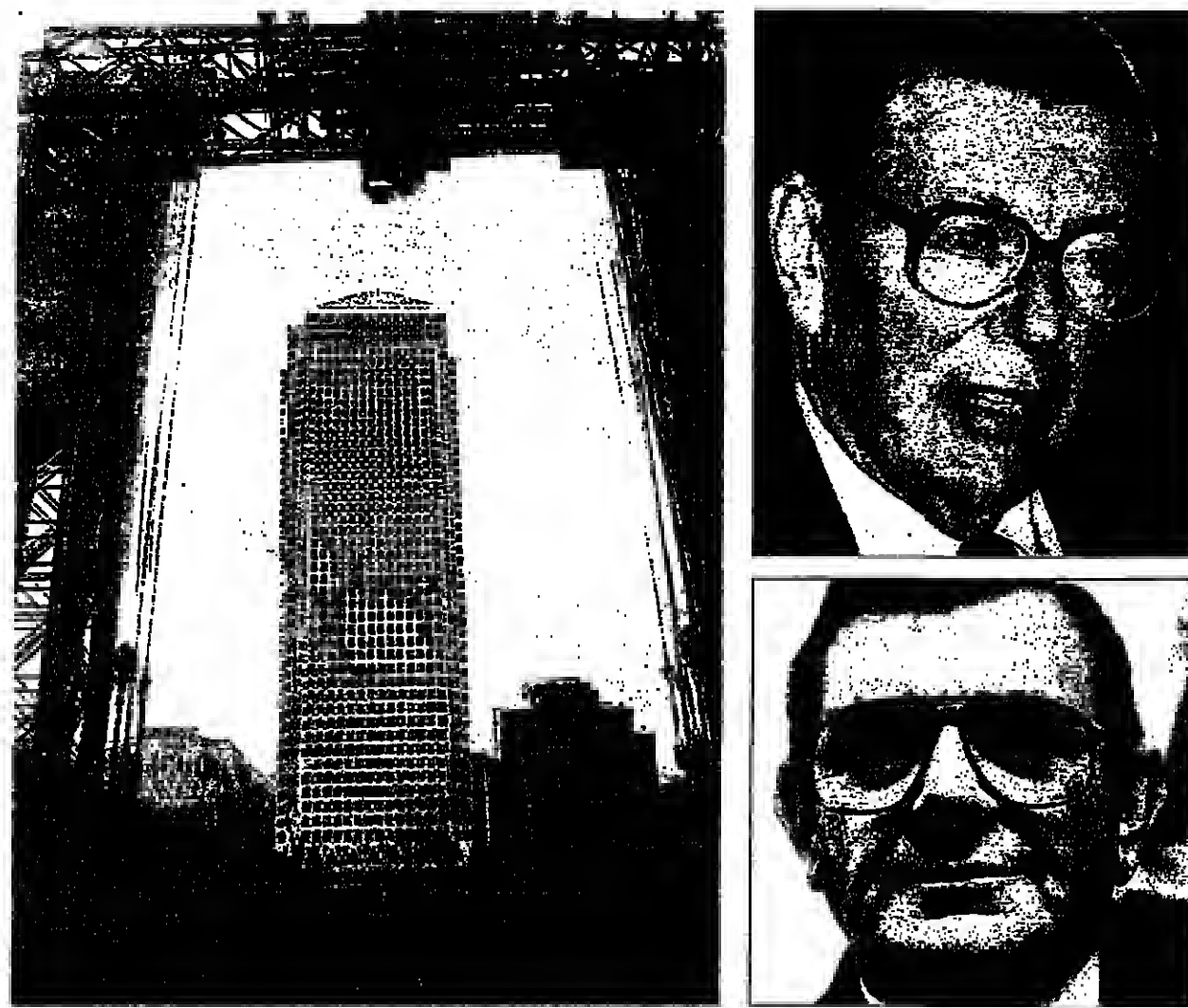
Andrew Buxton, Barclays' chairman and chief executive, explained yesterday why the bank had committed so much of its money to real estate development. He said Barclays believed at the time that it was lending at the peak of the market. Unfortunately, that was precisely the problem.

Sir John Quinton, his forerunner, launched the bank's lending spree with an £922 million rights issue in 1988. Sir John wanted to restore Barclays' position as Britain's biggest bank and his strategy required a dramatic increase in the loan portfolio. Much of that money was used as a springboard to increase the loans to property developers.

According to Julian Robins, BZW bank analyst, Barclays had £1.2 billion out to the property sector in 1986. With the extra capital provided by shareholders in 1988, the bank was able to gear up rapidly and the loan book increased by some £30 billion. Property loans accounted for 13 per cent of the growth even though they represented only 3 per cent of book in 1986.

At the same time, property values were soaring. The Jones Lang Wootton index of property rents and values shows an increase of 37 per cent between June 1988 and the peak of the market in the first few months of 1990. The subsequent collapse hit lending institutions worldwide but Barclays property debt problem is unusual, not just because of its size.

It provided large corporate loans to high profile and aggressive property developers, such as Olympia & York, Speyhawk and Imry, much of it at the peak of the boom. Barclays excelled at what is known as relationship banking, and in many instances backed such individuals as Gerald Ronson,



Lender and borrowers: Sir John Quinton, top, lent heavily on the Canary Wharf project and to Gerald Ronson

of Heron International, Speyhawk's Trevor Osborne and Martin Myers at Imry. The rationale was that these men were talented businessmen and would make money for themselves and for Barclays. Backing was often provided with corporate guarantees rather than security over individual projects.

The requirements of relationship banking sometimes went further than financial support. Sir John Quinton gave a character testimony for Gerald Ronson at the Guinness trial. But the property collapse brought low even the best and the brightest. Heron announced it was in breach of banking covenants last year because of heavy losses on speculative real estate development in the US. Barclays is believed to be owed more than £100 million out of Heron's total borrowings of £1.4 billion. Barclays is also

deeply committed to Olympia & York, having backed the mammoth Canary Wharf project in London's Docklands with a sizeable amount of the £570 million "club" loan, alongside Lloyds and a syndicate of European banks. But its total exposure of £220 million includes corporate lending to O&Y in North America.

Speyhawk, the once high-flying property developer, owes the bank £50 million and

is being kept afloat thanks to a debt-for-equity swap agreed in January with a syndicate of banks led by Barclays. Another 1980s success story that went wrong for Barclays was Mountleigh. The company went into receivership last May and is believed to owe the bank about £100 million.

Imry is Barclays' most spectacular property disaster, having cost it £240 million in provisions to date. In 1989, the bank financed a £314 million takeover of the quoted company by Marketchief, a vehicle backed by Eagle Star, Development & Realisation Trust, Prudential-Bache and Wolfgang Stolzenberg, a private investor. Barclays provided loans of more than £200 million to support the venture. Then in June 1991, the bank's exposure was doubled in a restructuring to some £420 million.

Barclays is committed to maintaining its relationships with at least some of its clients. Negotiations concluded late last year enabled the bank to take over Imry from Mr Stolzenberg, who had acquired all the shares in the 1991 refinancing. Barclays hopes the Imry team can work out the property portfolio and repay some if not all of the written-down loans to the developer. Speyhawk is another Barclays client being supported.

According to bank executives, the job is now risk management of the property portfolio. What that seems to mean in practice is continuing relationships with certain property developers who are respected while providing them with incentives to add value to the property assets in the form of shares or options. In pursuing that policy, Barclays has become owner of a property company. It remains to be seen how the bank will deal with another headache: Canary Wharf, which is expected to come out of administration soon. There, Barclays needs to find a formula agreeable to its syndicate partners, and a management team capable of running the development.

Tempus, page 27

Man who shares blame for losses

Continued from page 23

the end of last year that he will split the role of chairman and chief executive.

He said that "some careers have suffered" as a result of the mistakes of the past, but refused to be drawn on numbers or on at what level of seniority.

Mr Buxton said that he would tell shareholders about careers that had suffered if they were to ask, but "I am not going to talk about it publicly".

The pronouncement was interpreted as a willingness to reassure institutional shareholders but a reluctance to explain to small shareholders and customers.

Mr Buxton joined Barclays in 1963 from Oxford, rising through the ranks from his first clerical job in a west London branch.

He is not a favourite of the press, often coming across as aloof and verging on appearing disinterested. Former colleagues have said he does not

fit comfortably into the Barclays mould. Some describe him as a "cold fish".

Mr Buxton became group managing director in 1988 and was picked to be chairman and chief executive by fellow directors last year, assuming the title of chief executive last May and taking over the job in January.

Sir John retired early, believed to be unhappy at being asked to hand over his executive role.

Sir John was only the second chairman of the bank to come from outside the families, which, despite their minimal control over the Barclays shares, with less than 1 per cent, have dominated the running of the bank.

Two members of the old families, including Mr Buxton and Sir Timothy Bevan, the former chairman, are on the current Barclays board, and there are several family members still working their apprenticeship out in the regions.

BILSTON & BATTSEA

Pre-tax: £222,000 loss
EPS: 4.1p loss (2p)
Div: Nil (nil)

BRAIME (TF & JH) (Fin)
Pre-tax: £582,000
EPS: 26.68p (30.22p)
Div: 6.5p, mkg 8.75p

GALLIFORD (Int)
Pre-tax: £327,000
EPS: 0.27p (1.56p)
Div: 0.5p (0.95p)

INTEREUROPE TECH (Int)
Pre-tax: £542,000
EPS: 7.05p (7.95p)
Div: 2p (2p)

FERRY PICKERING (Fin)
Pre-tax: £1.5m (£2.25m)
EPS: 9.77p (12.68p)
Div: 2p, mkg 7.5p (5.5p)

MTL INSTRUMENTS (Fin)
Pre-tax: £3.7m (£3.8m)
EPS: 13.3p (16.8p)
Div: 2p, mkg 3.6p

REINSHAW (Int)
Pre-tax: £3.07m (£4.18m)
EPS: 4.4p (6.1p)
Div: 2.5p (2.5p)

SUMIT (Fin)
Pre-tax: £186,893
EPS: 2.2p (1.4p)
Div: 1.4p (1.25p)

Final. Profits last time were £120,000. One-for-one rights issue to raise £753,000. Exceptional charge of £181,000.

Profits last time were £667,859 and final dividend was 6.5p, making an unchanged 8.75p. Turnover eased to £5.5m from £7.3m.

Profits last time were £2.08m. Company said the final dividend is likely to be reduced. Net cash reduced to £5m from £26m.

Profits last time were £814,000. Turnover down from £5.4m to £4.8m. Q2 better than Q1 and trading continues to improve.

Employee numbers reduced by 15 per cent and capital expenditure requirements likely to be minimal, to help reduce borrowings.

Dividend last year was 3.4p. Turnover rose to £19.4m from £18m but operating profit fell to £3.1m from £3.9m.

Turnover rose from £21.3m to £22m. Although German and Japanese were weak, other economies show signs of recovery.

Profits last time were £157,434. Affiliation between SUMIT, Equity Ventures and Schroder Venture Advisers working well.

Court of Appeal

Law Report March 5 1993

Queen's Bench Division

Disclosure of medical records

Dunn v British Coal Corporation

Before Lord Justice Nourse, Lord Justice Stuart-Smith and Lord Justice Mann
(Judgment February 26)

In a personal injury action an employee who claimed damages for loss of earnings or impaired earning capacity had, if so requested by his employer, to disclose general medical records to his employer's medical advisers.

The Court of Appeal so held in allowing an interlocutory appeal by the employer, British Coal Corporation, from the order of Mr Justice Tudor Evans sitting at Newcastle upon Tyne on May 20, 1992, that had restricted disclosure by the employee to current and pre-existing medical records relating to the site of his injury.

Mr Simon Hawkesworth, QC and Mr Simon Gash for the employer; Mr Christopher Carling for the employee.

LORD JUSTICE STUART-SMITH said that the employee, aged 53 and a miner, while working at the coal face was struck by a wooden chock. He suffered

injury to his neck and had been unable to resume work.

He was claiming against his employer damages for, *inter alia*, loss of earnings until his normal retirement age. The employee's sickness records were before the court and showed that he had had a short period off work from back ache in 1988 and six weeks before the accident had had one or two days off because of neck ache.

The employer wished to have the employee examined by its own consultant and had requested that the consultant be shown the employee's hospital records, general practitioner's notes and the notes of the employer's own medical officer.

The employee consented to discovery by the employer of all records relating to the neck but declined to agree anything more extensive in the absence of the consultant giving him reasons as to why he wanted to see more.

In January 1992, District Judge Wilson had granted the employer's summons to stay the action unless the employee provided full medical records.

Mr Justice Tudor Evans had upheld the employee's appeal, restricting the disclosure and stat-

ing that what the employer was not entitled to do was "to have possession of all medical records and notes and conduct a 'fishing expedition' to discover whether there may be something which might be relevant in reduction" of the employee's damages.

The broad issue at the trial would be as to the financial loss resulting from the employee's injury. That could be affected by any pre-existing condition in relation to the site of the injury and by some wholly unrelated condition which might supervene to affect the employee's earning capacity before normal retirement.

The documents requested by the employer were relevant to that issue. The employee had to prove that the loss of future earnings or earning capacity was caused by the accident. The onus was on him. Therefore he had to prove that he was in normal health and did not suffer from any condition which might cut short his working life.

The claim for damages was in issue and documents which showed that the employee had never suffered anything more serious than an attack of influenza were relevant to that issue. Just as much as documents that showed that he was suffering from some condition likely to cut short his working life.

An alternative approach was to consider what would happen if the documents were not produced before trial. The employer could issue a subpoena *duces tecum* for their production.

It was not disputed that they contained some relevant material.

Once they were produced to the court the employer's right not to have them disclosed by the holders to others, his right of confidentiality, was lost. They were not privileged documents: see *O'Sullivan v Freeman Ltd* [1987] 1 WLR 1047, 1055 per Lord MacKay of Clashfern, Lord Chancellor.

It was not in the interests of justice that disclosure should be delayed until the trial. Everything pointed to the desirability of early disclosure and that was consistent with the modern case-on-the-table approach to litigation.

The judge was concerned that the employee might justly object to some totally unrelated, but perhaps embarrassing condition being disclosed. That was understandable and a legitimate concern. But it could be dealt with by limiting the disclosure to the employer's medical advisers.

The documents were disclosed to them in confidence and they had to respect the confidence except in so far as it was necessary to refer to matters which were relevant to the litigation.

Thus, for example, the fact that a plaintiff was suffering some sexually transmitted disease would be irrelevant unless it affected his future earning capacity as might be the case if he had AIDS.

Lord Justice Nourse and Lord Justice Mann agreed.

Solicitors: Nabarro Nathanson, Doncaster; Brian Thompson & Partners, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Confusion no excuse

Dowty Aerospace Gloucester Ltd v Ballinger

Confusion between an employee and his union as to which of them was to initiate the employee's claim of unfair dismissal was not a matter which rendered it impracticable to have presented the application within time for the purposes of section 6(2) of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal Judge Hargrove, QC, Miss A. Maddocks and Miss A. P. Valel so held on February 17 in allowing an appeal by the employers from

the decision of an industrial tribunal that it had jurisdiction to hear the employee's claim.

JUDGE HARGROVE said that either the employee had failed to instruct his union to act, the union had been instructed and failed to act or between them they had failed to define who was to make the application. There had to be default on the part of one or other or both.

By elevating the confusion to the level of an excuse which rendered it impracticable to make the application in time, the industrial tribunal had erred in law.

Section 4 of the 1976 Act provides: "(2) It is unlawful for a person, in the case of a person employed by him at an establishment in Great Britain, to discriminate against that employee... (b) in the way he affords him access to opportunities for promotion, transfer or training..."

MR JUSTICE WOOD said that the applicant had come from Bangladesh to England in 1975. He worked as a croupier but in order to become a full manager he had to obtain a certificate by passing an oral examination on gaming legislation. The employees made it

National Justice Compania Naviera SA v Prudential Assurance Company Ltd (Ikarian Reefer)

Before Mr Justice Cresswell
(Judgment February 25)

Expert witnesses in civil cases had special duties and responsibilities including the duty to give independent and unbiased evidence. If an expert witness did not have expertise in a certain area or had insufficient information to reach a properly researched conclusion then he should say so.

Mr Justice Cresswell so stated in a reserved judgment in the Commercial Court of the Queen's Bench Division when giving judgment for the plaintiff shipowner upon its claim for insurance moneys for the loss of its ship, the Ikarian Reefer.

Mr Anthony Clarke, QC, and Mr Nigel Jacobs for the owners; Mr Stephen Tomlinson, QC, and Mr Stephen Kenny for the underwriters.

MR JUSTICE CRESSWELL

No duty to provide language lessons

Mecca Leisure Group plc v Chattrachong
Before Mr Justice Wood, Mrs M. E. Sunderland and Mr G. H. Wright
(Judgment February 23)

The operators of a casino were under no obligation to provide English lessons for a Thai croupier to enable him to qualify for the post of full casino manager and they had not discriminated against him on the ground of his race under the Race Relations Act 1976.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal so held when allowing an appeal by the employers, Mecca Leisure Group Ltd, from a decision of a Leeds industrial tribunal in November 1990 that they had unlawfully discriminated against the applicant, Mr Santi Chattrachong, within the meaning of section 1(1)(a) and 4(2)(b) of the 1976 Act.

Section 4 of the 1976 Act provides: "(2) It is unlawful for a person, in the case of a person employed by him at an establishment in Great Britain, to discriminate against that employee... (b) in the way he affords him access to opportunities for promotion, transfer or training..."

MR JUSTICE WOOD said that the applicant had come from Bangkok to England in 1975. He worked as a croupier but in order to become a full manager he had to obtain a certificate by passing an oral examination on gaming legislation. The employees made it

said that a fire had broken out in the engine room of the vessel. The owners claimed that it became an actual or constructive loss because of a peril which had been insured against.

The underwriters' claim was that the Ikarian Reefer was deliberately set on fire with the owners' connivance. The question for decision was whether that was proved to the required standard and expert evidence was given.

His Lordship said that he considered that a misunderstanding on the part of some of the expert witnesses had taken place concerning their duties and responsibilities which had contributed to the length of the trial. The duties and responsibilities of expert witnesses in civil cases included the following:

1 Expert evidence presented to the court should be, and should be seen to be, the independent product of the expert uninfluenced as to form or content by the exigencies of litigation: see *Whitehouse v McGregor* [1981] 1 WLR 246, 256

per Lord Wilberforce.

2 Independent assistance should be provided to the court by way of objective unbiased opinion regarding matters within the expertise of the expert witness: see *Polvi v Ltd v Commercial Union Assurance Co plc* [1987] 1 Lloyd's Rep 379, 386 per Mr Justice Garland, and *Re J* [1990] FCR 193 per Mr Justice Cazalet. An expert witness in the High Court should never assume the role of advocate.

3 Facts upon assumptions upon which the opinion was based should be stated together with material facts which could detract from the concluded opinion.

4 An expert witness should make it clear when a question or issue fell outside his expertise.

5 If the opinion was not properly researched because it was considered that insufficient data was available then that had to be stated with an indication that the opinion was provisional (see *Re J*), if the witness could not assert that the report contained the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the

truth then that qualification should be stated on the report: see *Derry & Co Ltd and Others v Weldon and Others* (No 9) [1990] per Lord Justice Staughton.

6 If, after exchange of reports, an expert witness changed his mind on a material matter then the change of view should be communicated to the other side through legal representatives without delay and, when appropriate, to the court.

7 Photographs, plans, survey reports and other documents referred to in the expert evidence had to be provided to the other side at the same time as the exchange of reports.

Having considered the evidence, his Lordship held that the underwriters did not prove to the relevant standard that the Ikarian Reefer had been deliberately set on fire and it followed that there was judgment for the owners for the appropriate sum.

Solicitors: Clifford Chance; 100 & Co.

Regina v Hall
Before Lord Justice Steyn, Mr Justice Garland and Mr Justice Roush
(Judgment February 26)

A judge erred in admitting the guilty pleas of a defendant's two co-accused for the sole purpose of expediting the trial when the co-accused were not on trial with the defendant.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, so held, allowing David Hall's appeal against his conviction at Birmingham Crown Court (Judge Toyn and a jury) on November 11, 1991 of unlawful wounding, contrary to section 20 of the Offences against the Persons Act 1861.

Section 74 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 provides: "(1) In any proceedings the fact that a person other than the accused has been convicted of an offence... shall be admissible in evidence for the purpose of proving, where so relevant, that any issue in those proceedings that that person committed that offence..."

MR JUSTICE REDMOND, assigned by the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, for the appellant, Mr Henry Graham, who did not appear below, for the prosecution.

MR JUSTICE ROUGHIER, giving the judgment of the court, said that the conviction arose out of a pub brawl, following which the appellant's two co-accused had pleaded guilty to affray.

The appellant had pleaded not guilty and his defence was that he had not been the aggressor but that the prosecution witnesses had been and that any violence used by

him had been in self-defence.

The prosecution had applied to disclose to the jury the pleas of the two co-accused. It was said that the application was made solely for the purpose of "de-mystification", since the jury might ask themselves why the other persons involved were not in the dock with the appellant.

Despite opposition from the defence the application had been allowed.

The prosecution argued that the judge had been exercising a general discretion quite apart from that contained in section 74 of the 1984 Act.

However, in the court's judgment, since the prosecution were applying to convey pleas of guilty of two co-accused the application was governed by section 74 and had to be made under section 74 in the absence of agreement with the defence.

It was important to bear in mind that there was no issue as to the trial as to whether the affray had actually taken place. The issue was whether the appellant had been the aggressor or the attacked.

The admission of the co-accused's pleas was not therefore permissible under section 74 as it did not go to any live issue. At the same time it had had the effect of straining the appellant's defence at birth.

In the court's judgment, the fear that a jury might be unduly mystified was not more than a trivial fear. The jury could simply have been told that they were concerned only with the defendant who was before them.

Solicitors: Crown Prosecution Service, West Midlands.

Accountant is data user under the Act

Data Protection Registrar v Griffin

An accountant who put information provided by clients on computer for the purpose of producing accounts for presentation to the Inland Revenue and other bodies was a data user within the meaning of section 1(5) of the Data Protection Act 1984 as he controlled the data within the meaning of subsection 1(5)(b) and was therefore required to register with the Data Protection Agency under section 5(1) of the Act.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court (Lord Justice Rose and Mr Justice Waller) so held on February 22 in allowing an appeal by the Data Protection Registrar against a decision of Kingston upon Thames Justices to dismiss charges of an offence under section 5(1) of the Act of failing to register when required to do so under section 5(1), brought against the respondent, Francis Joseph Griffin.

LORD JUSTICE ROSE said that the respondent controlled the contents of that data within the meaning of section 1(5)(b) because although the collection of the data was from information provided by the respondent's many individual clients none of them knew what information he was recording or the use he would make of it.

It followed that the only person in control of the data on the computer was the respondent who controlled the contents.

Driver of mini-cab

Nottingham City Council v Woodings

The driver of a marked mini-cab, whose vehicle was not a licensed hackney carriage, pled for hire, within the meaning of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, if he was approached by a member of the public and then entered into negotiations for the hire of the vehicle.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court (Lord Justice Rose and Mr Justice Waller) held on February 22 in allowing a prosecutor's appeal by way of case stated from Nottingham Crown Court (Judge Brunning and Justices) who had allowed an appeal by the respondent, Mark Woodings, against his conviction by Nottingham Justices under section 45 of the 1847 Act.

LORD JUSTICE ROSE said the respondent had left his licensed hackney carriage, registered as a mini-cab, responsible as a mini-cab by signs on the side reading "For-a-Car". The vehicle was not licensed to ply for hire as a hackney carriage under section 37 of the 1847 Act.

The vehicle remained unattended for a while and at that stage the respondent was not plying for hire. After he returned to the driver's seat of the vehicle he was approached by two plain clothes police officers who asked him: "Are you free?" He replied "Yes".

It was at that stage, having told the prospective passenger that he was free that he was plying for hire contrary to section 45 of the 1847 Act.

Deplorable publicity

In re an Action for Negligence (1992 C No 3063)

Although it was utterly deplorable that a journal connected with the law had not only published the fact that the defendants had made a payment into court but also the amount of that payment, it was appropriate for the judge to continue the hearing, or, if satisfied that no injustice would be done, to allow the cause to proceed.

HIS LORDSHIP said he would not comment further on the apparent contempt of court committed by the journal in question, since it was not represented before him.

MR JUSTICE KNOX so held in the

Chancery Division on February 22, after referring to Note 22/7/1 in *The Supreme Court Practice* 1993 to Order 22, rule 7 of the Rules of the Supreme Court, to the effect that if the rule as to non-disclosure was broken, it was open to the trial judge either to refuse to continue the hearing, or, if satisfied that no injustice would be done, to allow the cause to proceed.

MR JUSTICE WOOD said that the applicant had come from Bangkok to England in 1975. He worked as a croupier but in order to become a full manager he had to obtain a certificate by passing an oral examination on gaming legislation. The employees made it

Man who should
blame for loss

Portfolio Plus

From your Portfolio Plus card check your eight share price movements on this page only. Add them up to give you your overall gain or loss. If it is negative you have lost money. If it is positive you have gained money. If you win, follow the claim procedure on the back of your card. Always have your card available when claiming. Game rules appear on the back of your card.

No	Company	Group	Gain or Loss
1	P & P	Electrical	
2	Young (H)	Industrial	
3	Smith New	Fin Trusts	
4	Wilkes (James)	Industrial	
5	Walsley	Industrial	
6	Hambro	Banking	
7	Quaker Group	Foodstuffs	
8	Low (Wm)	Foodstuffs	
9	Metal Bullen	Newspaper/Pub	
10	Dorling King	Newspaper/Pub	
11	Star-Plus	Water/Print	
12	Siron Water	Water	
13	Harmony	Mining	
14	Radice	Electrical	
15	Clinton Cards	Drugs/Stores	
16	Deacons	Drugs/Stores	
17	Forster John	Textiles	
18	Evans Of Leeds	Property	
19	Northern Elec	Electrical	
20	Security Serv	Industrial	
21	Low Merch	Property	
22	Island Farm	Foodstuffs	
23	Lloyds Chem	Drugs/Stores	
24	Bluebird Toys	Industrial	
25	THORN EMI	Electrical	
26	South West	Property	
27	Rugby Group	Building/Rob	
28	Trident & Briton	Transport	
29	Ryl Rk Soc	Banking	
30	MR Data Mgmt	Electrical	
31	Gest	Foodstuffs	
32	ACT Group	Electrical	
33	LBMS	Industrial	
34	Elbief	Industrial	
35	Widom	Mining	
36	Winnert	Banking	
37	Enterprise	Oil/Gas	
38	Parsons Food	Foodstuffs	
39	Mos Bros	Drugs/Stores	
40	Wolfram D	Breweries	

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Please take into account any minus signs

£1,000 MATCH THE SHARES

If you have ticked off your eighth share in our Match The Shares game today, claim your prize by telephoning 0254 53277 between 10.00am and 3.00pm (see the Sunday Times for full details)

Three winners share yesterday's Portfolio Plus prize of £2,000. Miss J Collins, Mrs Green, Oxford; Sir R. Trowbridge, Fincham, Portsmouth; and Mr D Williams, Norwich, Norfolk.

1992/93 High Low Company Price % Net Yld P/E

BANKS, DISCOUNT, HP

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Barclays	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	HSBC	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Bank of Ireland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Bank of America	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of England	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

BREWERIES

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

BUILDING, ROADS

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

1992/93 High Low Company Price % Net Yld P/E

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

BUSINESS SERVICES

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

CHEMICALS, PLASTICS

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

DRAPERY, STORES

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

ELECTRICALS

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

Resilient performance

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began March 1. Dealings end March 12. Settlement day March 22. Forward margins are permitted on two previous business days. Prices rounded at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1992/93 High Low Company Price % Net Yld P/E

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

1992/93 High Low Company Price % Net Yld P/E

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

ELECTRICITY

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

FINANCE, LAND

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

FINANCIAL TRUSTS

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

FOODS

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

HOTELS, CATERERS

No	Company	Price	%	Net Yld	P/E
1	Adnams	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
2	Beck's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
3	Carlsberg	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
4	Heineken	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
5	King's	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
6	London & Lancashire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
7	Paragon	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
8	Prudential	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
9	Yorkshire	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5
10	Bank of Scotland	100.00	0.0	4.5	10.5

INDUSTRIALS

INDUSTRIALS									
150	130	120	110	100	90	80	70	60	50
150	130	120	110	100	90	80	70	60	50
150	130	120	110	100	90	80	70	60	50
150	130	120	110	100	90	80	70	60	50
150	130	120	110	100	90	80	70	60	50
150	130	120	110	100	90	80	70	60	50
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150	130	120	110	100	90	80	70	60	50
150	130	120	110	100	90	80	70	60	50
150	130	120	110	100	90	80	70	60	

30 UNIT TRUST PRICES

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

[illegible]

SE VOLUMES.

[illegible]

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):		FT 30 share:	2256.3 (+8.1)
New Jones 336.151 (+0.53)		Brussels:	
R/P Composite 447.07 (+2.19)		General 9980.29 (-13.80)	
Tokyo:		Paris CAC 528.85 (+2.47)	
Nikkei Ave. 16759.61 (+94.31)		Zurich: SKA Gen 4805.4 (-1.4)	
Hong Kong:		London:	
Hang Seng 6467.80 (+31.16)		FT A-AllShare 1415.75 (-3.97)	
Amsterdam:		FT 500 1554.09 (+4.22)	
AEX Tendency 101.01 (+1.1)		FT 100 Mines 58.6 (+0.2)	
Sydney: AO 1622.9 (+3.2)		FT Fluid Interest 113.02 (+0.28)	
Frankfurt:		FT Govt Secs 97.12 (+0.13)	
DAX 1087.40 (+6.33)		Bargains 35907	
		SEAQ Volume 640.11	
		USM (Dussmer) 151.79 (+0.01)	
TRADITIONAL OPTIONS:			
1st Dealings	2nd Dealings	Last Declaration	For Settlement
February 22	March 5	June 3	June 14
All options were taken out on 4/5/93: ASDA, Climon Cars, Crest Nicholson, Larstone, Norex, Repalain, Smith & Newphew, Tomorrow's Leisure, Transfer Systems, Volex For Foreign Services, Norex, Pats & Catts, Amhurst, Ferranti, Tesco.			

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Previous	Open	High	Low	Close-Volume
U.S. 100					
Previous open interest: 54,348	Mar 93	254.00	254.50	253.75	254.10 10610
Three Month Sterling	Mar 93	94.08	94.08	93.96	93.97 14552
Previous open interest: 288,012	Mar 93	94.82	94.83	94.51	94.52 17944
	Mar 93	96.05	96.07	95.68	95.69 17884
Three Mth Eurodollar	Mar 93	96.81	96.85	96.71	96.72 14552
Previous open interest: 21,437	Mar 93	96.70	96.74	96.70	96.73 10308
Three Mth Euro DM	Mar 93	92.04	92.05	91.91	91.94 54311
Previous open interest: 492,517	Mar 93	93.14	93.15	93.01	93.03 60251
U.S. Treasury Bond	Mar 93	113.03	113.04	113.03	113.24 31
Previous open interest: 390					112.14 10
Long Gilt	Mar 93	105-13	105-13	105-13	105-13 1218
Previous open interest: 80,728	Mar 93	106-16	106-10	106-10	106-12 24212
Japanese Govt Bond					
	Mar 93				112.09 0
	Mar 93	111.30	111.43	111.26	111.62 1171
German Govt Bond	Mar 93	95.90	96.15	95.59	95.88 32860
Previous open interest: 15,072	Mar 93	96.12	96.44	95.82	95.81 11394
Three month ECU	Mar 93	90.77	90.77	90.58	90.58 14552
Previous open interest: 17,492	Mar 93	91.83	91.85	91.60	91.71 894
Swiss Franc	Mar 93	94.78	94.79	94.71	94.73 4358
Previous open interest: 48,746	Mar 93	95.54	95.54	95.43	95.44 5453
Italian Govt Bond	Mar 93	96.65	96.85	96.54	96.60 1513
Previous open interest: 41,774	Mar 93	96.65	96.85	96.54	96.60 1513

MONEY MARKETS

Exchange Index compared with 1985 was down at 77.3 (day's range 77.2-77.4).				
STERLING SPOT FORWARD RATES				
Mkt Rates for March 4	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Austrianmark	2.6772-2.6852	2.6829-2.6763	11 1/2pts	11 1/2pts
Belgian franc	48.870-48.920	48.90-48.90	8 1/2pts	8 1/2pts
Openmark	9.1804-9.1650	9.1730-9.1530	10-1 1/2	21 1/2pts
Dubai	0.9854-0.9890	0.9857-0.9878	44-54pts	31-149pts
Dutch guilder	2.203-2.208	2.203-2.203	11 1/2pts	11 1/2pts
Frank	17.317-21.930	21.867-21.913	151-163pts	452-148pts
Italian lira	170.81-171.65	171.0-171.0	168-182pts	374-399pts
Mark	226.52-273.80	226.50-273.40	9 1/2pts	28 1/2pts
Monetary	1.7077-1.6985	1.8048-1.8065	18-106pts	92-104pts
Swiss franc	1.444-1.445	1.444-1.445	0.35-0.37	1.02-0.90pt
Yen	10.0520-10.1610	10.1030-10.1530	1-2 1/2pts	1-2 1/2pts
Yen	8.9400-8.1170	9.1020-8.1170	3-4 1/2pts	11 1/2pts
Yen	10.0410-11.4460	11.0310-11.4460	1-2 1/2pts	11 1/2pts
Yen	1491-169.75	169.55-169.75	1-2 1/2pts	11 1/2pts
Yen	169.55-169.75	169.55-169.75	1-2 1/2pts	11 1/2pts
Yen	2.2012-2.2116	2.2049-2.2080	2-2 1/2pts	6 1/2pts
Yen			1-2 1/2pts	6 1/2pts

Source: Exel

Premium + pr. Discount - ds

OTHER STERLING		DOLLAR SPOT RATES	
Argentina peso*	1.4415-1.4501	Australia	1.4114-1.4124

LIFE OPTIONS

Cattle					Cattle				
Series	Apr	Oct	Apr	Jan	Series	May	Nov	May	Nov
Local	5500	45	58	65	51	22	27	19	33
Foreign	1500	13	29	41	24	47	61	41	08
USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
Foreign	1500	13	29	41	24	47	61	41	08
USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
Foreign	1500	13	29	41	24	47	61	41	08
USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
Foreign	1500	13	29	41	24	47	61	41	08
USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
Foreign	1500	13	29	41	24	47	61	41	08
USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
Foreign	1500	13	29	41	24	47	61	41	08
USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
Foreign	1500	13	29	41	24	47	61	41	08
USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
Foreign	1500	13	29	41	24	47	61	41	08
USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
Foreign	1500	13	29	41	24	47	61	41	08
USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
Foreign	1500	13	29	41	24	47	61	41	08
USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
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USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
Foreign	1500	13	29	41	24	47	61	41	08
USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
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USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
Foreign	1500	13	29	41	24	47	61	41	08
USDA	5170	14	16	27	5	69	5	72	36
Foreign	1500	13	29	41	24	47	61	41	08
USDA	5170	14							

<p>1. <i>Chlorophyll a</i> (mg/g dry weight)</p> <p>2. <i>Chlorophyll b</i> (mg/g dry weight)</p> <p>3. <i>Chlorophyll a + b</i> (mg/g dry weight)</p> <p>4. <i>Chlorophyll a/b ratio</i></p> <p>5. <i>Chlorophyll content index</i></p>	<p>6. <i>Carotenoid content</i> (mg/g dry weight)</p> <p>7. <i>Carotenoid content index</i></p> <p>8. <i>Carotenoid content ratio</i></p> <p>9. <i>Carotenoid content index ratio</i></p>
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COMMODITIES

be bludgeoned by the realists. However a late in the develop, once of the delegates to re- work the availability of for about \$50 premium		ICIS-LOR. (London 6.00pm): Concerns that there might be a shortage of Mar physical trends drive the market higher.	
CRUDE OILS (Barrel FOB)			
Brent Physical	19.40	-0.45	
Brent 15 day Mar	19.50	-0.45	
Brent 15 day Apr	19.55	-0.60	
W Texas Intermediate (Apr)	20.00	-0.60	
W Texas Intermediate (May)	20.95	-0.40	
PRODUCTS (DMT)			
Spot CF Net Europe (except delivery)			
Propane Gas, 15	Mid:	Off:	
Gasoil (EC)	183 (-4)	183 (-5)	
Non EEC 1st Apr	187 (-4)	183 (-4)	
Non EEC 1st May	187 (-4)	183 (-4)	
3.5 Fuel Oil	75 (-2)	77 (-2)	
Naphtha	178 (-2)	180 (-2)	
FUTURES			
GULF Ltd			
GAS OIL			
Mar	178.75-79.00	Jun	176.00-76.25
Apr	178.75-79.00	Jul	175.25-75.50
May	178.75-79.00	Aug	175.75-75.25
Vat 20054			
BRENT 6.00pm			
Apr	19.35-19.34	Jul	19.35-19.37
May	19.35-19.34	Aug	19.35-19.35
Jun	20.35-19.36	Oct	Vol 32363
ULINEATED GASOLINE			
Apr	194.00-97.00	Jun	204.00-06.00
May	204.00-97.00	Jul	204.00-06.00
May	204.00-97.00	Oct	Vol 334
BIFFEX			
GULF Ltd (S/O's)			
High: 1350 Low: 1390 Close: 1392			
Mar 03	1401	1401	1400
May 03	1360	1355	1360
Jul 03	1210	1205	1208
Vol: 215	Lot: Open Interest: 2548	Index: 1380	4
LONDON METAL EXCHANGE			
Copper 1474.5-1475.75 Jan 1497.5-1498.0 Lot 1020375			
231.50-231.75 231.50-231.50 57875			

Albanian dinar	0.5470
Brazil cruzeiro	29998.0-30

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INFOTECH

Matthew May previews new technologies that could reduce the wiring in offices

Pulling the plug on the office

What can the manufacturers of high technology machines give the office that has everything? Since most businesses are already well provided with computers, fax and telephone systems, the big market lies in replacements, and, suppliers hope, convincing customers to upgrade existing equipment.

But one potential advance into which much research and development effort is being put is the idea of the cordless or wire-less office. Ideas range from equipping every employee with a mobile phone for use within an office building so a vital call is never missed, to cordless computer networks which, it is argued, will pay for themselves in the long term by the saving on recabling costs when computer equipment has to be moved. It could be a tough market. The wire-less office is being presented as the business project of the 1990s, just as hopes for the paperless office persisted in the 1980s, although with little effect.

The technology behind the cordless concept may soon become both good and cheap enough to interest at least some customers. The next question is which technology to choose, because the competition is great.

For a start there is a choice between radio, microwave or infra-red connections. Each system has its own advantages. Some are suited only to simple telephone calls, while others can cope with hefty computer workloads. But suppliers are also using each of these types of transmission in different ways, with varying techniques.

Radio transmission faces problems because regulatory approval is sometimes needed to ensure that appliances do not interfere with other uses of the radio spectrum. The frequencies made available can vary from country to country.

One of the most comprehensive systems under development is optical wireless, based on infra-red light. Researchers at BT laboratories, who are developing such a system, say that its advantages include a much wider band width than radio or microwave communications. This should make possible a wide range of cordless services, including the transmission of video pictures.

The drawback of infra-red is that it requires a clear line of sight between transmitter and receiver, which makes it difficult to send signals round corners or between the floors of a building. Or, as BT says, "Transmission is confined to the room where it is used, offering security advantages. And it does not interfere with other systems."

To get around the restrictions of infra-red, BT is working on what it describes as "leaky feeders", which would allow information to be relayed even in offices with complex floorplans. "Studies have shown that 70 per cent of computers are moved from their original site within two years," says Pete Smyth, of BT Laboratories. BT is also working on other mobile systems, so that a product such as a video link headset would enable specialist staff such as engineers or perhaps paramedic teams to communicate visually with headquarters.

Although cordless computer networks may sell because of the possibilities of direct cost savings, providing mobile phones in the office is more controversial. Employees will eventually be able to make and receive calls on small portable phones virtually anywhere within a workplace. Unlike expensive cellular mobile phones, such systems can be linked directly to company switchboards, so that the cost of calls will be the same as from ordinary phones.

Most senior executives prefer conventional telephones



Look, no wire: a video camera behind the ear and a portable phone help a technician to explain a problem to base

Suppliers say that the premium for adding portability in an office will be as little as 20 per cent over the cost of a traditional company phone system.

But will people always want to be available on their phones when they are at work? Will companies have to introduce codes of conduct on when and where the phones can be switched off? The benefits, says suppliers, include not missing important calls and saving the cost of having to return missed calls.

The most basic systems are those that use the CT2 standard. This was the standard used by teletext services although, given their disastrous history, it is an association about which few suppliers want to be reminded. "Teletext has proved a fiasco in the UK, and there are currently only around 16,000 teletext users across Europe," says Robin Meakin, the project manager for CTT, a research firm.

Teletext phones restrict customers to outgoing calls only, and they have to be used within 100 yards of a base station. Systems for the office surmount both obstacles. They can take incoming calls, and since they will be limited to one site, there will be no question of having to find a base station.

Later this month, Northern Telecom and Philips will demonstrate cordless systems at CeBIT, Europe's biggest computer and communications trade fair, which takes place in Hannover.

Companion, Northern Telecom's system, is based on CT2 and uses pocket phones. It can transfer calls between base stations, so people can receive calls anywhere in a building and walk while they talk.

Two versions, which can handle respectively 32 and 80 portable phones, will be shown. They can be linked to existing company ex-

changes, so it would be possible to give mobiles only to selected employees, such as sales staff.

More advanced and more expensive are systems based on the DECT standard. Unlike CT2 models, they will handle limited data transmissions such as electronic mail, and can provide three times as many telephone lines for a given area.

Other possibilities include giving a cordless phone at work a dual identity, with two numbers, perhaps using one for business and one for personal calls. During an office lunch, for example, the business number might be turned off, but calls made to the personal number would still ring.

Reception quality with either system should be better than that on cellular phones — and it will need to be. A survey last year found that two-thirds of senior executives are convinced that conventional phones are more cost-effective and more reliable.

An eye opener

JAPANESE researchers believe they have worked out why people get tired eyes from staring at computer screens.

Their experiment found that people blink less — but their tears evaporate faster — when they work on computers, so they get dry eyes. They suggest that a remedy may be simply to change the height of the screen.

When people look down rather than straight ahead, their eye openings are smaller. Therefore the tear film on their eyes dries more slowly. So the researchers suggest lowering the video screen and tilting it upward.

Windows pain

MICROSOFT's application to make the word Windows a trademark for its software which is sold worldwide has been rejected in America.

Trademark regulators say that the public understands the term "windows" to mean any computer software which utilises windows on a computer screen. Microsoft wants programmers who create software for Windows to obtain licences that give the company some control over the contents of the programs.

Bright future

THE West European market for computer products and services will grow by about 4.3 per cent this year and by 6.8 per cent in 1994, according to the industry group Eurobit.

Bruno Lamborghini, the president of the group, says that advances in mobile computing and communications systems will stimulate demand.

Sony outlook

SONY will soon start to sell professional digital recording equipment that should improve the quality of television news pictures.

The Japanese firm at present makes digital video equipment that works with 1/2 in tape, which is used to

shoot high-quality television pictures. But news broadcasts and other programmes shot outside rely mainly on Betacam camcorders and recorders, which use half-inch analogue tape.

Whizz kids

A PROJECT costing £2.5 million to test portable computers in schools and teacher training colleges has been started by the National Council for Educational Technology.

The scheme, which is aimed at finding the best ways in which portable computers can be used in learning, will test notebooks, palmtops and graphical calculators.

"Pupils will be able to use software for science experiments outside and be able to see the results of their



work instantly," says Fred Daly, the technical director for the NCET.

Rising star

THE computer maker Digital Equipment, seeking to broaden its personal-computer business, has launched a new range.

Powered by a 486 microprocessor, the range is an expansion of a line of personal computers that the company introduced last summer in its attempt to become a leading player in the field.

Analysts say that Digital has increased its market share in personal computing significantly over the past year and has jumped 15 places to seventh position, with about a 2 per cent share.

Sub-titles on your own TV

Videotapes with hidden text messages are on sale in Britain. The tapes contain captions designed to help many of the 7.5 million people in Britain who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The system, known as "closed captions", has been introduced to Britain by the National Captioning Institute (NCI), a non-profit making organisation formed in America in 1979.

Video captioning is not new — the BBC and ITV companies use the teletext service to transmit more than 60 hours of sub-titled television programmes a week. About 2.4 million deaf viewers regularly use the service.

Sub-titles are stored in part of the television signal, which is normally invisible, and teletext receivers use a special decoder to display them. But sub-titles are not available on videotapes that are bought or rented.

Some companies, such as Akai, Ferguson and Grundig, market video-cassette recorders that can record sub-titles. The snag is that the recorded sub-titles are "burnt" into the pictures and cannot be removed by viewers who do not need them. Closed captions cannot be seen unless the viewer uses a £100 reader unit, which sits between the video recorder and television set. Users can switch the captions on or off at will.

Film and videotape companies like closed captions because they do not have to make two versions of the same tape — one with captions and one without. And video rental shops do not have to stock the same title twice. The result is that leading home-video companies and the British Videogram Association, which represents video shops, will support the system. About 40 British video titles

A new system from America means that deaf people will be able to gain more enjoyment from watching video films in their own homes



Write stuff: a videotape of Top Gun with sub-titles

are available with closed captions and the NCI predicts that the number will grow to more than 200 by the end of the year. The titles are identified by a small "talking television" logo on the cassette case. They cost the same as ordinary tapes.

Cinema films encoded with captions include *Batman Returns*, *Cinderella*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *JFK*.

"For a long time, deaf viewers have been cut off from the video market," says Myles Moriarty, the NCI's co-ordinator in Britain. "Closed captions will allow them to

watch and enjoy videotapes." The NCI set up its British branch at the end of last year in Peterborough. However, the captioning is done in America.

A company wanting to add captions to a title sends a videotape and script to the organisation's headquarters in Washington, DC. In most cases, the NCI simply converts the American captions to British English, such as changing "color" to "colour", then sends the captions back on a com-

puter disc. The video company uses an encoder to add the captions to the master tape before it is sent to a tape duplication plant. The cost of captioning a video is about £1,000 an hour, but if the programme has already been captioned for the American market, this falls to £500.

The closed captions system has been popular in America, and 3,500 videotapes contain captions. The NCI also adds captions to live and recorded television programmes.

Teletext is not available in the US largely because the type of television system used there, known as NTSC, is not fully compatible. Every week, about 400 hours worth of programmes are broadcast with closed captions. US legislation requires that all new television sets sold after July with a screen size greater than 13in must be equipped with closed captions decoders.

However, Mr Moriarty does not think that closed captions will be transmitted in Britain for a while yet. "It is technically possible", he says, "but there are legislative hurdles to be overcome." He adds that closed caption broadcasts from cable and satellite are another possibility.

"Closed captions can also have an educational role. For example, they can help children learn to read. In America, some people are using the system to learn English."

The NCI has also developed a system which enables a tape to store captions in several languages to provide multilingual tapes that could be sold in several countries or to help with the language teaching.

GEORGE COLE



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The two-computer family

The age of the family with a PC in the office, the car or the kitchen is dawning, reports David Guest

Economists may look in vain for signs of recovery, but the computer industry has at least one shoot that has remained green throughout the recession. Sales of battery-powered portable computers have grown at a spectacular rate in recent years. The market has also become a race of rivals as computers have become smaller and lighter.

In 1992, says Romtec, a research company, sales of desktop PCs increased by 20 per cent, but their market share declined. However, sales of the notebook type of portable computer more than doubled as earlier, heavier portables — called transportable and lap-top — declined.

Jane Birley, Apple UK's regional product manager, says that when Apple launched its Powerbook range 18 months ago it knew it would have to revise it quickly. "There can be no more two-year product development cycles," she says.

The retailer Kaytech reports that portables will soon account for 10 per cent of its sales. A year ago, says Jason Hawke, the purchasing director, the figure was only 2 per cent. Mr Hawke suggests two reasons for the increase: prices are falling and the power/weight ratio of the systems is getting better.

As an illustration he quotes the case of an IBM portable with most of the features of a desktop PC. "It costs £1,400 now, but when it was launched it was £4,000," he says.

The market leaders in the portable field are Toshiba, Compaq, Apple and Sanyo — no other company has more than 5 per cent of the market, according to Romtec.

Compaq's UK marketing director David Clarke believes that the main opportunity for increasing sales lies in attracting the kind of people who have not previously used any computer.

He contrasts the total sales of about 150,000 units in 1992 with the number of field sales representatives on the road in the UK, estimated at 500,000. There is a similar number of service engineers. All such people are potential users of portable computers, he suggests. Another growing group of portable PC buyers is the computing equivalent of the two-car household. Some users with a desktop PC at the office also have a notebook PC in the car or at home for convenience.

"There are also 'pool' portables at the disposal of a number of people, and there are executives who are buying their own," says Lewis Shrock, manager of portable products at Compaq.



Finishing the office report at home with a Toshiba notepad, above, or out and about with a Sharp, below



way to sell insurance except in an office."

He adds that banks have found portables to be surprisingly useful in customer profiling for marketing new products. "They report that customers will share information much more rapidly with a portable computer than they might if presented with a questionnaire or a telephone interview."

Although portable computers have become widespread, portable accessories will not necessarily follow. However, modems for communication with other systems can be built-in at only a slight weight cost. A modem capable of handling fax traffic weighs just an ounce or two.

Canon, which claims 65 per cent of the market for portable printers, recently indicated which way it sees the market moving by launching a notebook PC with a built-in printer. The unit weighs less than 8lb and is the size of a telephone directory.

Given the sales prospects for portable PCs, this seems to be another example of a British first being profitably exploited by overseas companies. The first portable personal computer was designed in 1982 by the British entrepreneur Adam Osborne. Then IBM, the American computer giant, introduced its PC and re-wrote the rules of personal computing: the Osborne 1 was obsolete almost overnight.

Portable technology still in the dock

Will the slot-in PC bridge the gap between the portable and the desktop?

The PC business borrowed both the terminology and the concept of the docking station from space exploration and science fiction. But a PC docking station is an earth-bound piece of equipment, designed to allow a portable computer to work as a desktop and to allow the mobile user to share the facilities enjoyed by office colleagues.

One of the drawbacks of portable computers is that when used while travelling, operators do not have access to the wider technology that supports desktop machines, such as a database, printers or networks.

Giving mobile workers, sales reps, engineers and marketing executives both a desktop system and portable makes the cost of computing per person shoot up. The docking station is designed to overcome this problem. A docking station is a large expansion box which sits permanently on the office desk and into which a portable PC can be slotted for connection to a local area network, company database, printer or storage device.

Most of the companies supplying portable and desktop PCs have adopted the docking station concept, including Compaq, Apple, IBM and Olivetti. There was even a suggestion that the portable PC and docking station might finally replace the desktop machines altogether, but this has not proved to be the case.

Most suppliers' portable machines fit into the top of the docking station, where they are secured by mechanical clips, but Apple has adopted a radically different approach. The company studied the efforts of rival manufacturers before coming out with its own docking station for its Powerbook notebook-style portable systems.

The internal codename for the Apple DuoDoc was Bob W, which stood for the Best of Both Worlds, explains Pamela Schure, a product manager with Apple. Instead of fitting into the top of the system, the Apple notebook folds up and is slotted into the docking station rather like a video cassette into a recorder.

One of the advantages of the DuoDoc is that the machine automatically reconfigures itself when the portable engages the docking station. This means that any work carried out while

prompts to ensure that closing down the system was intentional, not accidental. Pamela Schure argues that this is an advantage over some other systems where data is lost if the mechanical clips are accidentally released.

But despite the attractiveness of the concept, docking stations are proving slow to gain ground. The first reason for this slow start is cost.

Surprisingly, the cost of a portable machine and a docking station can be more than that of a separate portable and desktop system.

Alan Rogers, Olivetti's product manager for portable PCs, who has been selling the systems for about a year, admits there is a 20 per cent premium for those who buy the docking station and portable rather than two separate machines.

A second reason is that there are software and hardware combinations that allow users to link portable computers into an area network without the expense of a docking station. David Frankling, the sales and marketing director of Hamilton Rentals, says: "If docking stations were selling, then we would keep a large stock of them, but they are not. Most docking stations are designed for laptop machines, but it is the notebook sector of the market that is selling well."

There are cases where a docking station would be valuable. For instance, where, perhaps, a team of inspection engineers — working in shifts — was equipped with portable machines and needed a desktop system to update a central database at the beginning of each shift.

But generally the package is too expensive, when PC and portable prices are dropping almost daily.

SEAN HALLAHAN



Simplicity: the Apple Duo docking system

High cost is still the principal drawback to mass sales

The portable was being used is recognised by the docking station, and the entire system is updated accordingly. The DuoDoc also operates a full system shutdown if the eject button is pressed, giving the user a series of

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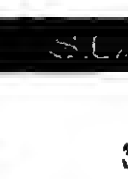
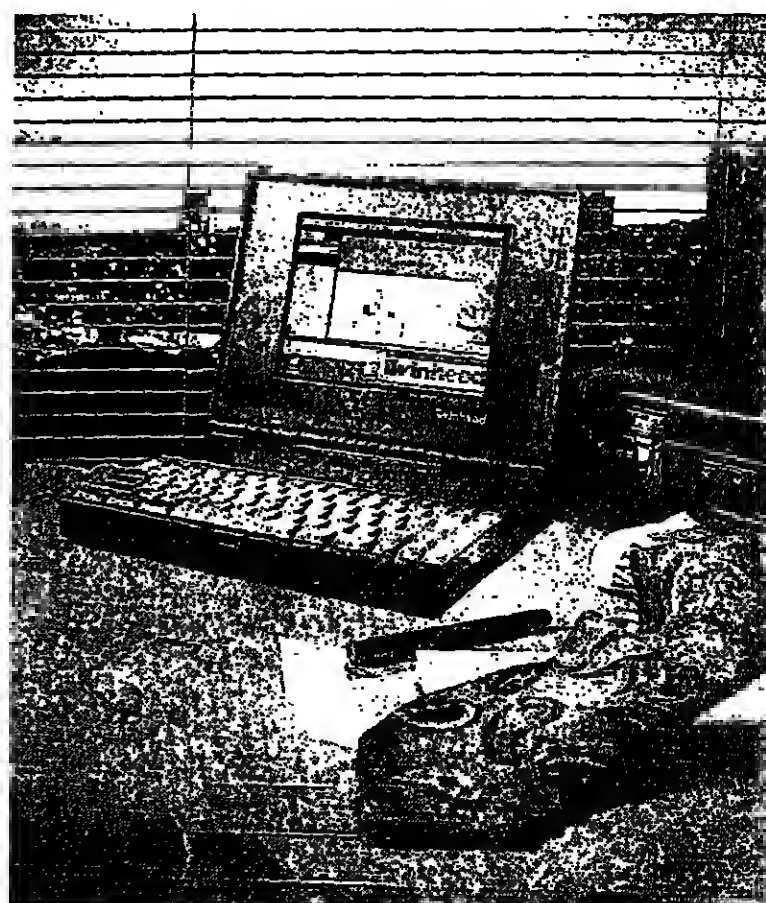
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KIM WILSON

Computer companies facing big losses are setting up as consultants — but, asks David Guest, will anyone credit their advice?

The British economy's move away from a manufacturing base towards services has been helped along by information technology. Now information technology itself is moving in the same direction with the services side becoming increasingly important.

Companies that used to be known for making computers are switching their emphasis. Many of the biggest — including IBM, ICL and Digital Equipment — hope to thrive by emphasising their ability to help customers to put big business systems together.

As a result, while the total headcount of those working in the British computer industry is falling during the recession, the structure of employment is also changing.

The French-owned manufacturer Bull, for example, declared 300 redundancies in Britain last year, but it intends to recruit between 100 and 150 consultants this year.

Last year, shortly before reporting the biggest loss in corporate history, IBM established consultancy as a separate branch of its business. In other words, while one part of a company had money running through its fingers, another was offering business advice to other companies.

IBM became the target for comments along the line of "physician heal thyself". The company replied that it had gone through

Only real experts need apply

difficult times and was well-placed to advise others. This will lack conviction until IBM itself is out of the woods.

If IBM has a particular credibility problem, all manufacturers taking the consultancy route face questions of independence and competence. All insist that if a rival supplier's equipment is the appropriate answer to a particular information technology problem, they will say so and help to implement it.

"Independence is the key point," says Bill Lindley, the chairman of the Association of Professional Computer Consultants. "If you're being paid as a consultant by someone you should be acting in their best interests. You wouldn't have your heart checked by a pace-

maker salesman, would you?"

The competence of the new wave of consultants is also under scrutiny. Mr Lindley says: "You can employ someone at £20,000 a year, charge them out at £1,000 a day and make a good profit."

Dick Nathan, Mr Lindley's predecessor in the APCC chair, says: "The nature of the task is quite different from what most people with the job title 'consultant' in the computer industry are equipped to do. The majority are senior sales people. Their skills are not appropriate. The effective consultant is one whose skills and knowledge can enhance a client's understanding of a problem, for example to convert a technical decision into a commercial risk decision."

When Bull was building up its services business, focusing on systems integration, it looked for recruits among its own technical specialists, especially those with networking expertise. To these it added individuals brought in from formal consultancy backgrounds, especially from well-established computer consultancies such as EDS and Logica. This year, its main targets for recruits are the more general management consultancies such as Touche Ross and Coopers & Lybrand.

Consultancy in the computer business has always been a term that lent itself to a variety of interpretations. Brian Martin, who set up Logica's consultancy operations in 1982 and returned almost a decade later to revive them, identified three types of IT consultant.

First came the sellers of equipment offering product oriented consultancy, second are "top-of-the-pyramid" consultancies with few implementation skills and, in the middle ground, organisations such as Logica, independent of the hardware manufacturers but with software operations and experience of putting systems together.

Experienced freelance contractors often find themselves referred to as consultants, though they may roll up their sleeves much more than the term generally suggests. Few, however, try to avoid the term, as it implies higher fees.



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ARTS

ROCK page 39
Grunge rock once provided a welcome dose of adrenalin. Now it just looks passé



VISUAL ART: Richard Cork on a great American purist; plus recommended shows and market news

Made of the white stuff

No captions are permitted to disturb the impeccable white walls in Robert Ryman's Tate retrospective. All the picture titles are confined to a simple list near the door of each room. The implication to visitors is clear: concentrate on the paintings.

Such a purist priority hardly comes as a surprise. Ryman's high reputation in American painting is based, after all, on his devotion to whiteness. For over 30 years of sustained achievement, he has remained fascinated by this one colour. Its possibilities absorb his energies as much today as they did when he first defined his mature identity.

Not that Ryman arrived at this singular commitment without hesitation. As his Nashville childhood might suggest, he first became enthralled by music. At Tennessee Polytechnic he was a passionate saxophonist, and in the early 1950s his appetite for Charlie Parker and bebop led him to New York. But gradually he became intrigued by the quieter satisfactions of oils, brushes and canvas. To support his new obsession, Ryman obtained a job as a gallery guard at Manhattan's modernist temple, the Museum of Modern Art. He stayed there for seven years, avidly scrutinising the great paintings.

Such a stimulus would be difficult to exaggerate. Ryman learnt to look hard at paint surfaces. The job must have suited his contemplative nature, for the Tate exhibition cannot be appreciated by visitors impatient with the notion of lingering. These undemonstrative images need time, and their meditative serenity demands an unprejudiced mind.

The young Ryman also needed time, as the first room discloses. His earliest painting, started in 1955, is covered in a heavily worked, hot orange. Resembling a segment from an especially sumptuous Rothko, this vehement picture

looks almost sacrilegious among its reticent neighbours. But it already announced Ryman's preference for an all-embracing veil of colour. In that respect, the orange intrusion is more prophetic than some of the later paintings in the room.

Sometimes, straggling lines run through them, as in Roger Hilton's abstractions from the same period. Unruly black rectangles disrupt the prevailing calm in several images, and one small painting contains the phrase "The Paradoxical Absolute". Inscribed in rough white capitals on a black ground, the words suggest that Ryman knew, even then, that his search for purity and perfection would never reach a definitive goal.

He was, however, already sure of enough of his work to sign it with pride. One small 1958 painting leaves a generous amount of tan paper free for the artist's name, written in startlingly large, loopy pencil lines. Indeed, the whole picture seems to rejoice in the proclamation of an artist's identity.

The dealers did not share Ryman's delight. Related neither to the Abstract Expressionists nor the emergent Pop painters, his work found scant favour until a gallery finally gave him a one-man show in 1967. Nothing was sold, but the steady rise of Minimalism soon ensured that international interest began to focus on his work.

All the same, Ryman cannot be associated with the more conceptual side of the Minimalist movement; despite his commitment to whiteness, intuition is central to his way of working, and some of his most delectable images are charged with spontaneous sensuality.

Wedding Picture is particularly seductive. The white paint is handled in patches so loose that the warm brown Bristol board shows through in many places. At the upper right corner, the whiteness fades away, leaving a patch of green flecked with yellow to assert



Robert Ryman's *Wedding Picture*, 1961: these undemonstrative images need time; their serenity demands an unprejudiced mind

itself. The outcome has the immediate attraction of a landscape transformed by an uneven fall of snow.

There is an impulsiveness about such a strategy which links up with his early enthusiasm for bebop. And sometimes, as in a small painting on unstretched linen canvas from 1961, the pigment achieves a surprising lushness.

During the 1960s, though, Ryman felt the need to discipline his intuitive play with procedural rigour. After completing some spectacularly large, busy pictures, where plump white squiggles dance all over a ground of red, ochre and purple strokes, he moved towards more regulated rhythms. One can

summate little untitled picture is covered in a single coat of white enamel. The paint appears to have been floated onto the canvas. But the pigment stops short of the edges all the way round, leaving an irregular line of hairsbreadth brown to act as a foil for the imperturbable mildness.

Ryman, who shares Matisse's desire to aim at an art of supreme well-being, must have realised that he wanted to retain this quietness of surface. For he then proceeds, in subsequent pictures, to drag his brush across the canvas in a series of parallel, horizontal bands. The outcome should be even more abstract than before, but associa-

tions with the visible world will not entirely go away. The thin lines of dark canvas between each stripe resemble faint tremors in an otherwise placid, infinite sea.

As the show proceeds, Ryman gradually eliminates gesture and opts for the smoothest surfaces possible. He brings the wall into play, too, securing *Advance* with Plexiglass fasteners which travel down the painting like a pair of braces. Steel, bolts and anodised aluminium become evident, introducing in the penultimate room an air of mechanised aridity. Since it compares so disappointingly with the earlier sensuality, I was relieved to find that his most recent paint-

ings return to a direct involvement with the stuff of pigment.

One work in particular, *Versions VII*, builds up a delicate cloud of vigorously applied white paint on the thinnest of wax-paper grounds. The result is wonderfully diaphanous, and near the centre a V-shaped form hovers like the memory of a bird in flight. It is a fugitive image, indicating that beneath Ryman's long preoccupation with paint as a material substance lies an awareness of life's fundamental transience, conveyed with all the elusiveness of a dream.

Robert Ryman continues at the Tate Gallery, Millbank, London SW1 (071-821 1313) until April 25

ART MARKET DIARY

Exit the Medicis

LORD ELGIN is selling a seven-painting cycle from his Scottish ancestral home, Broomhall. After gracing the main hallway for nearly 200 years, it will be sold at Sotheby's on April 21.

The cycle was commissioned by Catherine de' Medici, and depicts aspects of her family's genealogy. Timothy Clifford, the director of the National Galleries of Scotland, regrets that they will be split up, but he cannot afford the estimated £500,000.

● **AUCTION experts beware.** The art investment advisers Poensgen and Sokolow have taken to faxing their opinions on forthcoming sales to journalists, and these opinions can be acerbic. Take the 19th-century picture sale at Sotheby's on March 17. This is condemned as "very poor indeed". It would be surprising, they conclude, if "over 50 per cent of the lots found buyers".

Service charges

CHRISTIE'S do not normally sell stolen goods, but a soup plate from which Catherine the Great once dined was the exception on Monday. Both the auction house and the anonymous private buyer who paid £26,450 for the lavish bowl knew that, by rights, it is still owned by the Russians.

The 797-piece service commissioned by Catherine in 1773 to be in "the best and newest style" was plundered by looters during a fire in the Winter Palace in 1837. Three years later 160 pieces from the service appeared in London. Some found their way into museums, including the V & A and Fitzwilliam.

But the new owner of the bowl can probably sleep easy. Since its removal from the Winter Palace, the bowl has passed through so many hands that it is unlikely to be repatriated now.

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ARCADE

CRITIC'S CHOICE: GALLERIES

● **IVON HITCHENS:** Two shows mark the centenary of Ivon Hitchens's birth. The Jacobson show is of landscapes, largely painted in Hitchens's middle period, roughly 1936-56, when he was delicately balanced between the laboriousness of his early work and the perhaps excessive facility of his last years. The Waddington show includes some of the later South Coast pictures, which verge on abstraction. Arguably so little has been said about Hitchens as a modern master because there is so little to say of such pure painting. Bernard Jacobson Gallery, 14a Clifford Street, W1 (071-495 8575). Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm, Sat, 11am-5pm, until April 1.

Waddington Galleries, 12 and 34 Cork Street, W1 (071-437 8611). Tues-Fri, 10am-5.30pm, Sat, 11am-5pm, until April 3.

● **SERGEI CHEPIK:** The leading Russian emigre artist's first London show in two years reflects strongly the effect of his recent life in Paris and travels in Spain. But the strong element of Russian grotesque is still there in his images of Quasimodo's Paris, the bars of Pigalle and his continuing variations on the idea of the ship of fools, with himself often figuring as Petrouchka. Roy Miles Gallery, 29 Bruton Street, W1 (071-495 4747). Mon-Sat 9am-6pm, until April 7.

● **PARIS, A CITY IN THE MAKING:** The Pavillon de l'Arsenal in Paris has a permanent collection illustrating the planning and construction of Paris through the ages, with all sorts of high-tech means of presenting the material. A touring version of the show now comes to London. Gallerie Matisse, Institut Français, 17 Queensbury Place, SW7 (071-589 6211). Mon-Fri, 10am-6.30pm, until April 2.

● **COLOUR AND ARCHITECTURE:** Contemporary architects from 15 different countries present a single project each, involving a significant use of colour. Inevitably much of the work could be categorised as post-Modern, but demonstrations show that even within the international modern movement colour can (and should?) play a vital part. RIBA Heinz Gallery, 21 Portman Square, W1 (071-580 5533). Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm, Sat, 10am-1pm, until April 7.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

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ROCK ON FRIDAY: An in-depth weekly review and preview of the world of music past, present and to come

Grunge passes its sell-out date

Has the free spirit of the sound from Seattle lost out to the money-men? David Sinclair on an excitement gone cold

The hippy ideal died along with Meredith Hunter, the young man stabbed to death at a Rolling Stones concert at Altamont Speedway, in California, in 1969. The end of glam-rock was signalled by David Bowie's bombshell announcement, in 1973, of the retirement of Ziggy Stardust. And punk was buried in 1979 along with the Sex Pistols' bassist Sid Vicious.

So far, thankfully, there has been no comparable symbolic event with which to close the chapter on grunge. A dizzying succession of grunge bands march on, but the signs of the movement's dissipation and imminent demise are nevertheless there for all to see.

It was near the end of last year that Kurt Cobain first wore a T-shirt bearing the legend "Grunge is Dead", and he should know. As the man at the helm of Nirvana, the group which has both defined and, arguably, destroyed grunge by submerging it in the rock mainstream, Cobain is a figurehead and spokesman by default — grunge's Johnny Rotten. As such, Cobain is aware that the more successful grunge becomes, the more meaningless it is as a concept.

The movement which began in splendid, flaky obscurity in the northwestern port of Seattle, Washington, has now turned into a caricature of itself: a global, platinum-plated bandwagon, bankrolled by the multi-national record companies. And, as a modern fashion statement, grunge now looms from the pages of *Vogue* magazine and the upmarket supplements like some grotesquely distorted mirror image of its genuinely bohemian blueprint.

The original followers of grunge, the dropouts and longhairs who became known as "slackers", have even been assimilated by Hollywood, notably in Cameron Crowe's film *Singles*. Like the hippies, anyone wearing a bit of old denim and vaguely in need of a haircut can qualify as one of the gang. Suddenly it all seems a bit passé.

By amalgamating the sound of heavy metal, the melody of pop and the energy of punk, grunge sent a welcome dose of adrenalin pumping through the clogged arteries of rock. But its coherence as a musical force is now increasingly in doubt as any number of acts make hay while the sun shines.

In the case of Alice in Chains, who played at the Town & Country, and Come, who played at Brixton Academy last weekend, the association with grunge is more to do with accidents of timing and geography than with the actual sound of their music.

Convened in Seattle in 1987, Alice in Chains featured in *Singles*, and eventually hit the jackpot with their million-selling second album, *Dirt*, released last September.

On stage in London, they started with all the fierceness and flair at their command, rattling off in quick succession the two best tracks from *Dirt* — "Dam That River" and "Them Bones". But from there it was downhill all the way as the riffs got slower and the mix got murkier. Their famously druggy lyrics made scant impression, but as the Black Sabbath-derived motif of "Dirt" gave way to the unashamed Zeppelin steal of "Angry Chair", a faintly depressing profile of a rather leaden, nouveau-heavy metal band emerged.

Come originates from Boston, but having released an acclaimed single, "Car", on Seattle's celebrated Sub Pop label in 1991, they have been swept along on a wave of euphoric coverage in the music press. Their set at Brixton was dire. Too full of their own importance to project anything very much from the stage, they perpetrated a dull, listless, self-regarding drone from start to finish, a salutary example of the kind of self-indulgence that is

The movement which began in splendid, flaky obscurity has turned into a caricature of itself

now taking root on the margins of the grunge ticket. However, Dinosaur Jr, who headlined the Brixton show, turned in a brilliant performance. Led by J. Mascis, widely regarded as the godfather of grunge and the prototype slacker, the trio was founded in Amherst, Massachusetts in 1985, and the progression from the inchoate hardcore rage of their early albums to the sophisticated melodic touch of their latest UK Top 10 hit, "Where You Been", mirrors the softening process which grunge has inevitably undergone over the years.

They still looked pretty tough at Brixton, the three men exuding a physical presence as big and hard and menacing as their sound. Stationed in an enclave between his speaker cabinets and a massive pedalboard, Mascis lunged about him, his hair a constant curtain across his face as he cranked the brutal chords and croaked the blissful melodies to "Start Choppin'" and "Out There".

Supporting Alice in Chains at the Town & Country, were Screaming Trees, a less successful but far more engaging quartet from Ellensburg, Washington (two hours down the road from Seattle). Their strongest card is singer Mark Lanegan, a man blessed with a gruff, blues-tinged voice a bit like Jim Morrison's, only with a better tone.

Flanked by the hulking shapes of the brothers Van (bass) and Gary Lee Conner (guitar), Lanegan steered his way through a brief but varied set, ranging from the power of "Nearly Lost You" to the more pop-orientated "The Secret King", a repetitive and approach very much in keeping with the original free spirit of grunge.

But the most pleasantly surprising performance of the lot was by the little-known Dutch quartet Bettie Serveert, who opened the Brixton show. The combination of Carol van Dijk's seductive vocals and guitarist Peter Visser's manic but melodic playing was out of this world. They are perhaps the most imaginative and forward-looking of all these bands — so is it just a coincidence that Bettie Serveert are also the only one with no obvious grunge credentials?

HYPER: Pink Floyd's *Dark Side Of The Moon*. Re-issued on Monday in a campaign blatantly calculated to cash in on the 20th anniversary of the album's original British release on March 24, 1973. This new "limited edition" (EMI CDD50M 20) has been digitally remastered (again?) and is packaged in a "redesigned"

slipcase. The remastered album was repackaged only last year, as part of the *Shine On* boxed set, and it has been estimated that one in every five households in Britain already owns a copy. How much more can the market bear?

SINGLE: Brontë Brothers' "A Winner Too" (This Way Up WAY 755). Debut disc from Leeds-based band led by singer, songwriter and guitarist Mark Cresswell. Co-written with Tanita Tikaram, this is a gorgeous

rootsy chug of a song with touches of highlife guitar flitting above an irresistible funky undertow.

TELEVISION: Frank Zappa. Exclusive interview with the ailing, but still vigorous, polymath on next Thursday's *Late Show* (11.15pm, BBC 2).

QUOTE: "Yes, I have been to your country before — about 2,000 years ago." Bono, responding to a question from an Israeli journalist.

NEW WAVES

The rock insider's guide to the Next Big Things

For the majority of humans, the word techno conjures up images of sleek black boxes from Japan, bursting with micro-chips and ready to run the planet. Polygon Window, who also calls himself The Aphex Twin but remains Richard James to his mum, certainly crosses techno music. His latest album, however, includes "Bike Pump Meets Bucket," made with just those humble implements.

In the past, James has soldered himself by accident to his own home-made electronic instruments during performances in front of thousands of impatient techno ravers. Being a Cornishman, he seems to take such mishaps in his stride. The main track on his single is called "Quoth" and was inspired by the industrial equipment he was obliged to use while tunnelling under St Michael's Mount during a summer job.

"Quoth" will be released and deleted on the same day (March 22), giving collecting obsessives the ultimate opportunity for a rare acquisition. Warp Records is not so eccentric that it allows all its artists such a brief moment to find their public. After inventing the term Electronic Listening Music for its *Artificial Intelligence* compilation of last year, this Sheffield-based company has begun to corner the market in a branch of techno also known as progressive, intelligent or armchair.

None of these sobriquets has pleased such serious practitioners as Black Dog Productions or B12, both from London. Neither does happiness flow when pundits predict, either in dismay or relief, that this new genre will fill the Pink Floyd vacuum. Black Dog's *Bytes* and B12's *Electro-Soma* are both poised at the front of Warp's album release schedule. Recorded in small, domestic studios, the digital pops and analogue squirts of these records are underpinned by sadness. Perhaps the techno's bright, mechanised optimism or raucous hedonism have been cancelled by the future.

DAVID TOOP



Crossing the line into bad old heavy metal: Layne Staley, lead singer of Alice in Chains, from Seattle

SEVEN DAYS OUT AND ABOUT NEXT WEEK

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RECORDS: The difference between timeless, retro and old-fashioned

Stop if you've heard this one

HOTHOUSE FLOWERS
Songs From The Rain
(London 828350)

IT ALWAYS seems as if a lot has happened in Irish rock between Hothouse Flowers albums, and usually it has. But the band's music remains its curiously timeless appeal.

Their enduring trick is to preserve an air of gentle, childlike naivety while making music of great emotional power and sophistication. Few artists who are not called Van Morrison could sing a song called "Isn't It Amazing" about the voyage through life, and not sound either credulous or vacuous. Liam O'Maonlai, however, passes it off with a unique air of innocent authority. O'Maonlai handles the deeply spiritual "Good For You" and the neogospel finale of "An Emotional Time" with a similarly sure-footed touch.

The band nails down the song arrangements with a touch more firmness and overall precision than in the past, but generally they stick to what has now become a clearly defined stylistic path. The only danger is that some people who think they have heard it



Pride of Ireland: Hothouse Flowers in blooming form

all before may fail to give this beautiful album the close attention it so richly repays.

LENNY KRAVITZ
Are You Gonna Go My Way
(Virgin 7 86984)

SO HE was right all along. With his penchant for crushed velvet flares and analogue tape

records, the original retro man had already harnessed the alleged magic of the good old days long before the currently fashionable stampede back to the 1970s began.

Naturally enough, his third album finds him at his most unrepentant and there are lashings of distortion and tape hiss added to the usual anti-luvian drum sounds and quaint mixing techniques.

There is the familiar mix of hard rocking struts and tender ballads written in the image of the usual heroes: a sub-Lennon ballad ("Believe"), a salacious, Primus-style funk-up ("Come On And Love Me"), a pleading Curtis Mayfield falsetto ("Heaven Help"). Kravitz may be stuck in a groove, but his timing is good.

THE TRAGICALLY HIP
Fully Completely
(MCA MCD 10700)

IMAGINE a road-hardened, yet intellectually credible band from North America with a

singer whose words are both resonant and weird. Not R.E.M. as it happens, although the Tragically Hip, from Kingston, Ontario, are every bit as popular as R.E.M. in Canada, and there are echoes of Michael Stipe's writing in the resolutely opaque lyrics of Gordon Downie.

On tracks like "Eldorado" and "Looking For A Place To Happen" Downie's vocal delivery also invites comparison with that of Peter Garrett of Midnight Oil.

But the marvel of this album is its gorgeous guitar textures, so clean and warm yet hard enough to give a tense, edgy quality to most of the songs.

The best track, "Pigeon Camera", has an eerie, drifting feel. Towards the end it is swept off into the distance by a patchwork of guitars, a chiming church bell and odd snatches of Mexican percussion. It is quite the most sensual sound I've heard this year.

LIVING COLOUR
Stain
(Epic 472856)

WHILE Hothouse Flowers and Lenny Kravitz have returned to the fray none the worse for having been away, Living Colour have not been so lucky. Their unyielding brand of politico-trash metal was par for the course at the time of their last album, *Time's Up*, in 1990, but the goalposts have since been shifted by the grunge revolution. The ridiculously convoluted arrangement of "Mind Your Own Business", the mega-funk riff of "Never Satisfied", the coarse death metal blast of "Go Away": it all now sounds, unintentionally, rather old-fashioned.

DAVID SINCLAIR

TODAY'S ALBUMS

- 1 Are You Gonna Go My Way — Lenny Kravitz (Virgin America)
- 2 Ten Summoner's Tales — Sting (A&M)
- 3 Whatever You Say, Say Nothing — Deacon Blue (Columbia)
- 4 The Bodyguard — Various artists (Arista)
- 5 Diva — Annie Lennox (RCA)
- 6 Automatic For The People — R.E.M. (Warner Brothers)
- 7 Lead Singer — Rod Stewart (Warner Brothers)
- 8 Unplugged — Eric Clapton (Duck)
- 9 Dangerous — Michael Jackson (Epic)
- 10 If I Was: The Very Best Of Midge Ure & Ultravox (Chrysalis)

List compiled by MRSB

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